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Six lectures on pastoral  
theology





PASTORAL THEOLOGY  
AND  
SCIENCE



SIX LECTURES  
ON  
PASTORAL THEOLOGY

WITH AN APPENDIX  
ON  
THE INFLUENCE OF SCIENTIFIC TRAINING  
ON THE RECEPTION OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH

BY  
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## PREFACE

THE following Lectures were written for, and delivered to, young University laymen who were contemplating Holy Orders. The Appendix is a dissertation, not a lecture, on a different but kindred subject on which I had been requested to write. The Lectures and Appendix have been written piecemeal, amid the stress of varied and constant work, and this must be the apology for their style.

The selection of subjects was partly made for me, as will be seen by reference to the footnote on p. 4. But the treatment of them has been mainly determined by conversation and correspondence for years past with young laymen and clergy. I know how

difficult it is, perhaps impossible, for any one to enter into the thoughts and needs of men of active minds forty years younger than himself. This, however, is what I have tried to do; and they alone can be judges how far I may have succeeded in helping them to see that the ministry of the Church of England is possible to men who feel the call to pastoral work, but dare not sacrifice intellectual honesty and activity, and freedom to "follow the gleam."

The Lectures do not profess to do more than deal with "attitudes of mind." They touch principles: they do not enter into details. But I am well aware that on details also guidance to ordinands is much desired and needed, and such guidance should be extremely clear and plain. How are they to view and to teach Bible stories, such as the Creation, the Fall, and the Flood, or the giving of the Law, and in general the miraculous narratives of the Old Testament? What may they say, and

when, and how? And New Testament problems, and the interpretation of the relation of the language to the substance of the Creeds, call for the most truthful and spiritual teaching. Some of these questions, and others going deep into philosophy, have been brought to me in private. No lectures to young clergy and ordinands would be more useful than conversations on such difficulties. It is difficult to believe that such difficulties were entirely unfelt at any epoch, by any individual, however simple: the "assent" of a thoughtful conscience must always, one would think, have been subject to some qualification. But now the Ethics of assent and of conformity have for obvious reasons become more difficult; and it is wiser to face these difficulties and go on, than to shut our eyes, or even go back.

In these Lectures and Appendix there is nothing, I believe, which is at all startling or novel: the thoughts and principles are either familiar to most of us, or such as all may accept.

But in the application of these principles there is work for many years to come, work which will tax the heads and the hearts of the generation to whom I speak. "I write unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you."

JAMES M. WILSON,

ROCHDALE VICARAGE,  
*May 1903.*

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# LECTURE I

## ABSTRACT

THE limitation implied in the word "pastoral."

The method of study of theology, compared with that of the study of the natural sciences. Theology rests on human experience and thoughts. Hence "pastoral theology" suggests the theology of pastoral experience, the scientific study of God's revelation of Himself in man. This involves the study of revelation in the past, and the tests of its truth. There is a progress in revelation, and therefore in theology. Relation of experience to revelation, and to certain doctrines of revelation in particular.

The fundamental assumption in the word "theology." The substitution of moral idealism for belief in a living God inconsistent with theology. Its essential weakness. The danger of reaction at the present day from materialistic dogmatism into moral idealism.

The distinctive marks of the pastoral spirit—the belief that every one "has a soul to save"; that Christian faith is the permanent factor in human progress; a deep sense of sin and struggle; a desire to set forth Christian truth; a sincere respect for others; a sense of the need of self-consecration.

# I

## THE MEANING OF "PASTORAL THEOLOGY," AND THE ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATIONS OF THE PASTOR.

THIS course of lectures does not follow quite the ordinary lines. It is an attempt, so far as is compatible with the conditions of this lectureship and with my own limitations, to offer some help to those who are contemplating Holy Orders, by emphasising alike the unalterable essentials for the work of the ministry, and the large growth and latitude in thought and opinion and action that such work permits and invites; to place theology before you, not as a study which you can master now up to a certain point in a text-book, but as a continued course of combined observation and research. It is an attempt to outline some of the opportunities for raising the ideals of the nation, for

which a post in the ministry of our Church offers advantages, not attainable by most of us in any other way; to suggest the far-reaching national importance of a true and noble Christian theology; to fortify and enrich faith by showing how once more Christianity is absorbing truth from all sides, and in particular from the immense development of scientific methods of observation and reasoning, as well as from the results of historical criticism of our documents and of our institutions. Finally, it is an attempt to give, as far as time will permit, some practical suggestions as to the life, teaching, aims, and activities of those who thus devote themselves to the interests of the pastoral ministry of the Church. I aim, it will be seen, rather at showing our increased power of attack than at strengthening our lines of defence.

It is an immense programme, far beyond my powers to deal with as I could wish; but it is for this that the Electoral Board<sup>1</sup> has sum-

<sup>1</sup> "It has been the deliberate policy of the Board to treat the field of 'Pastoral Theology' in the widest possible way, securing lectures upon very various portions of it. This time it was not so much the wish of the Board to provide lectures on ordinary parochial work.

moned me, and I cannot shirk the task. It would be far easier to deal either with the important questions of parochial organisation and method and order, or with suggestions for the discipline of personal life and for study ; but I think it my duty to attempt to bring these large, vital, central questions, which lie at the root of our ministry, into the teaching offered to ordinands from the University, however inadequately I may do it, in hope that others more qualified for such work may continue and supplement, and if need be correct, my teaching. Lectures of this kind are wanted, to prevent the undue and mistaken limitation of candidates for Holy Orders. But some few preliminary remarks are necessary.

*Pastoral Theology.*—What is meant and implied by the adjective "pastoral" in this

That branch of pastoral theology has been amply treated of late. The series was to give our intending clergymen some guidance with regard to the kind of difficulties of belief that they would be likely to meet with in the course of an ordinary ministry, and the wisest mode of dealing with them. . . . The Board did not indeed wish to tie you down to that particular line of instruction, but to leave you quite free to choose your own subjects. Its hope, however, was in the direction I have tried to indicate." (Letter to Archdeacon Wilson from Professor Mason, 18th February 1902.)

connection? It is a limitation of some kind. These are not to be lectures on theology in general. But what exactly is the limitation? Is it to the theology that finds its source and sanction in pastoral work? Or to the theology that is specially needed for pastoral work? Or are these really identical? And are we quite clear what we mean by the substantive "theology"? Let us begin by trying to think out the meaning of these two words. Pastoral *theology* is not the same thing as pastoral *care* or pastoral *work*.

If I were announced to give a course of lectures on geology (to take that as a specimen of the natural sciences), you would all know perfectly well from what basis I should start. I should start with the visible, tangible materials of which the earth is composed, their arrangement and distribution, and the actions now at work modifying these arrangements. And having laid before you a sufficiently broad basis of familiar facts, partly tested by our own eyes and hands in specimens, partly exhibited by photographs and maps and drawings, partly confirmed by others whose observations we

trust, I should proceed to build up a connected provisional theory of the structure of the earth, of its gradual formation and history; not forgetting, indeed, to point out our complete ignorance of origins, the vast gaps in our knowledge, and the inequality of evidence for different parts of the theory; and to indicate the points still needing investigation, and to draw a warning from the failure of some early theories; but showing how, in general, the theory embraces the facts, so far as they are known, and the facts verify the theory. Such is the method adopted in teaching natural science.

Now is there anything corresponding to all this in the study of theology? Of course it is not a physical science, and I cannot illustrate it by specimens and photographs, and verify its results by experiment. In some respects it is more analogous to history and philosophy. But, *mutatis mutandis*, is the method of study and of teaching the same? Is there, in other words, in theology a basis of verifiable facts on which verifiable inductions rest? And if so, what is that basis?

I say at once that there is such a basis of facts, and that it lies in human hearts and human experience, and in the laws of human thought; and that since the work of the pastor should bring him constantly into living, sympathetic touch with these human hearts, he has the means of ceaselessly testing, purifying, enlarging, correcting his theology. His theology may at last, therefore, be called pastoral, because it is tested, enlarged, purified, verified by his pastoral experience.

This then is one meaning of the limiting adjective "pastoral," and helps us to distinguish the subject of these lectures from historic, from systematic or dogmatic, and from metaphysical theology. These may be the work of a student in his library; but the student of pastoral theology must be himself a pastor in some degree, a pastor in spirit. In truth he must be a man that is in touch and sympathy with human life, drawing from man, as from an exhaustless fountain of experience, fresh evidence, fresh illustrations, of his teaching about God. It is on this ground that theology must be regarded as a science. In natural science, as



Lord Bacon said, "*omnia a rebus ipsis petenda sunt*"; and so the pastor draws his theory slowly, hesitatingly, modestly, *a rebus ipsis*. They may often perplex him; but these facts of human nature, intractable as they are, form the material of his science. We all have to learn to respect facts—"to see things as they are," as nearly as we can. Theological beliefs are not the invention of priests or philosophers, which could be altered by the will of man; they are not the dicta of an infallible or authoritative Church; they are not inferences from an infallible book; they arise ultimately out of the nature of things; they are rooted in human nature; they are verified by ever-renewed and ever-enriched human experience; they arise out of the one eternal thing, the eternal mystery—life in God and man. And just as the study of natural philosophy or of natural history assumes a fresh dignity and worth when it is seen to be the study of God's work, of God's self-revelation in the laws of nature and of life, so the study of theology assumes a fresh reality and interest when it is seen to be the scientific study of God's

revelation of Himself in man, and His supreme and unique revelation of Himself in Christ.

I am emphasising this unfamiliar aspect of the word "pastoral." The work of the pastor has the surpassing and truly scientific interest of bringing men into contact with facts—facts of the deepest interest, psychological, philosophical, historical. The facts are not easily defined or isolated; they have to be studied by the large and loving heart, as well as by the logical head and the trained philosophic mind—*pectus facit theologum*; and both heads and hearts make mistakes if they go far from facts, or view them through the disturbing and blinding influences of prepossessions. Such a study of theology may well be called pastoral. It is an essential element in the development of man's knowledge of himself and of God; and it grows as living bodies grow, by the perpetual assimilation of new matter from without, and the perpetual rejection of that which has done its work.

The pastor will be very modest in his attitude towards truth; but he should always be conscious that he may contribute something

from his own experience to advance or correct the sum total of human experience which finds its expression in theology. This is the privilege and inspiration of all scientific study. Facts are what they are: we cannot alter them. Our explanations may change, must change: the facts remain. We master nature, and find her unsuspected powers, by studying and obeying her. Is it not equally true to say that in the same way we shall find out and justify God's will for man?

No one will, I hope, understand me to say that every one has to construct his own theology afresh for himself. Behind our Christian theology lies an immense mass of fact and of the experiences of others. But nevertheless the result is not final; the record of human experience is not closed. Life is an ever-flowing, widening stream. In geology the accepted theory is of immense value; coal-miners and railway contractors, and all sorts of practical men, use the accumulated knowledge acquired by the past, which is incorporated into the theory, and made common property; they use it as a framework, but they also ceaselessly

modify and extend and correct it. It is difficult to say of the theoretic geologist and the practical man which owes the larger debt to the other.

It is precisely so in the case of theology. The test of the value of doctrine is its making for righteousness—its lifting men nearer to God—and this test is applied in the life of a nation in the work of the religious teacher. The pastor corresponds to the practical man. Unconsciously the pastorate drops, first tacitly, then explicitly, such theoretic teaching as does not make for truth and righteousness, and then after a time that teaching drops out of the theoretic science also. How, for example, has the doctrine of everlasting punishment, in the physical sense in which it used to be taught, dropped out? Not only because it is seen to be inconsistent with the whole thought of God as revealed in and by Christ; but also because it has been shown by experience not now to make for righteousness; not to deter from sin, but to make for horror, and disbelief, and aversion from God. And then the theologian finds that after all the

doctrine was only accommodated to the time, that *αἰώνιος* may have another meaning; and the material hell drops out of dogmatic, as out of pastoral, theology. Progress in systematic theology comes by the slow progress of which this is an instance, and every faithful and truth-loving pastor contributes to this progress.

The pastor therefore must always be a learner, and he will be specially helped by the wisest and holiest minds to interpret his own experience, and to plant his own feet firm on that sure and eternal rock, the Word of God in the human soul. He must verily become as a little child.

If a young pastor begins his work humbly, knowing that he is entering on the infinite field of human relationship to God, with some clue indeed, some outline map of the region, in the faith and experience of all who have gone before, but not yet the intimate knowledge that comes with personal experience;—if he has an intense love of truth and a scientific habit of mind that tests and verifies all that presents itself to him as true;—he will find to his joy that the old message which he will find

everywhere, in Psalm and in Prophet as well as in the Gospels, still reaches the heart—

The Lord does know the way of the righteous,  
And the way of the wicked perishes.

And this truth, reached in this way, carries a cogency and conviction that is won in no other way.

Now I can conceive a reverent and thoughtful mind among you saying, "If theology is, as you seem to say, based on human experience, what is revelation? I thought we got our theology, our knowledge of God, by revelation." But, I ask, are the two statements incompatible? Does revelation come to the world otherwise than through human experience? Is it written in the clouds of heaven? Is not all the revelation in the Old Testament given us in the lives and words of men? Is not the revelation given us by our Lord Jesus Christ given to us in His human life, and expressed in terms of verifiable human experience? And do we not believe that at this day the Holy Spirit is guiding and teaching us in terms of human experience? There

is, of course, a Deism which makes its God—if there is a God in Deism—infinately remote from men. With that Deism I have no concern. But if we believe in God's Fatherhood at all, we believe that there is in us something of the divine Life, and that what is best in us reveals its origin. That belief in the divine rests on the bed-rock of experience. The thoughts and aspirations of the best men, the experience of the saints living and dead, are in themselves a revelation. We are surrounded by revelation ; it is not limited to the past. There is a revelation in us, as well as to us. The two things, therefore, that we speak of, and may even for a moment contrast, the experience of man and the revelation from God, are essentially one thing ; the supernatural is always passing into the natural ; there is one path of communication between God and man. We look up the path or we look down it, but the path is the same. And all the past experience of the world, all its religious treasures, and, most of all, the unsurpassable treasure of the revelation in Christ, thus becomes a part of our own experience, part of the intercommunion

between man and God. This is what is meant by saying that theology rests on experience; it is as true of dogmatic as it is of moral theology, of the sanctions alike of faith and of conduct.

And it may be worth while to indicate here how the experience of a pastor almost unconsciously confirms those great truths which we pre-eminently regard as revealed. The pastor, *quâ* pastor, has light to throw on the doctrine of the Incarnation. From the point of view of the text-books of theology, the evidence for the Incarnation is mainly historical; and of course this historical evidence to a fact in history can never be replaced or dispensed with, though it can never amount to demonstration. But if his eyes and heart are open, and his mind humble, the pastor is always coming across such striking proofs of unnoticed goodness, such loving and unconsciously beautiful self-sacrifice, perhaps in quite unexpected places, that he is driven to acknowledge the incarnation of the divine in the human life of to-day; and every imperfect and fragmentary presentation of it is to him an



evidence of the perfection somewhere, somewhere. Every sparkle from the rippling sea is a proof of the sun. He is able to see perfect in Jesus Christ the complete manifestation of God, so far as God can be represented in finite humanity, just because he has seen it with reverence, in its imperfect manifestation, in so many humble living men and women. Some of us can but dimly see the divine in the inconspicuous life of labour; we are like the brethren of our Lord, unable to see anything divine in the Carpenter of Nazareth, while He was working in His home for daily bread.

There is another remark that will be made by a different class of hearers. "The very word theology," it may be said, "implies that God is a real object of knowledge, and that some knowledge of Him is attainable and attained by man. Are you not going to say something on this great implication?" And the answer is that I am not going to do so. We may set out on the path to find out God by various paths suited to our own temperaments: by the study of apparent design and power in

nature, leading to the thought of an Intellectual Designer and Creator; or we may set out from the laws of our understanding, which seem to compel us to assume that nature is governed by final causes, and that a Being and Mind, with purpose and will akin to our own, is the Cause of the Universe; or we may set out from the moral law within us, and our consciousness of freedom, which makes to many men the existence of God an ethical necessity of thought. With these and other paths to theology, suggested by the contemplation of nature, by the laws of thought, by psychology, by ethics, and by philosophy generally, we have nothing now to do, except thus briefly to point to them as the ways by which, according to men's different temperaments and environments, some assurance is obtainable by them that the object of theology is real, and that some knowledge of God is really within the reach of man.

But I do not deal with this philosophical question from lack of qualification. Moreover, one must begin somewhere, and I begin by assuming the reality of this knowledge. There

is no pastoral theology, and no theology at all, if this belief in the reality of a personal God is an illusion. I think it necessary to say this at the outset in the plainest possible way. And I will explain why.

There is a very strong tendency at present on the part of a religious school of thought to abandon the conclusions both indicated by these converging but difficult lines of thought, and rooted in popular conviction, and to rest their religious teaching on the basis not of the Being of God, but on that of the ethical experience of man alone. This tendency is the natural reaction from excessive dogmatism, and from speaking about God with familiarity and assurance, and with a bold and free anthropomorphism. Men may feel that morality and religion are secure without such theology as that. So they exclaim, "Let theology go—this is an age of inductive science; we have a secure basis of facts in human nature alone. Ethics and psychology and experience are enough by themselves as guides to conduct. It is not necessary to construct a theology out of them. Religion will survive," they even say, "if men lost belief in God.

Moral idealism will survive with a few, and they must inspire the many."

Whether you are familiar with this way of expressing a tendency of modern thought I do not know. But I am quite sure that some men are largely, even if unconsciously, under the influence of a tendency to substitute this moral idealism for the conscious service of a personal God. This is not a point on which to dilate now. I only call your attention to the fact that in the very title, "Pastoral Theology," we assume the objective reality of God, *quem nosse vivere, cui servire regnare est*. And I wish to insist on my conviction that it is not possible to cut off our belief in a living and present God, and our conscious relation of service to Him, and yet permanently retain, transmit, and strengthen in their growth a moral ideal and the pieties and beauties of human character. The belief in the living God is their root. Cut them off from it, and they will languish and die. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is" (Hebrews xi. 6). There may be truly pastoral work, there are beautiful, almost ideal lives, and a loveliness

of personal goodness, without any formulated theology, without the conviction of a Divine Personality. This springs from an ideal of perfection inborn in heart and mind, which does not carry with it, of necessity, any suggestion that the ideal exists in God, or has been manifested in Jesus Christ, or is due in us to the presence of a Holy Spirit. Not one word would I say to discourage the efforts of any such moral idealist who is possessed by these holy aspirations, even if such a one has not yet found in intellectual conviction their goal and realisation. There is a work for such a man in the world; and the conviction has come to many as a result of such work. The apostles followed Christ, and loved Him, and lived His life, and preached Him, and then they found out who He was, and received the Holy Spirit. It is as true as ever it was that "he that desires to do God's will shall know of the doctrine." Their desire led to their knowledge, and then they became the preachers of Christ.

This moral idealism, noble and lovely as it is, is not yet theology; least of all is it pastoral

theology: it is the origin of theology, the purest origin; it is the aspiration after God, and assuredly it will find God. But it is not yet the theology that the pastor will want. While it remains moral idealism it lacks just the elements of inspiration, of intenseness, of stability, of communicability, of power over sin. Such idealism, when confronted with widespread moral degradation, with blank indifference and materialism, and when, after years of labour, it sees no result, then it is heart-broken. It lacks the rigidity and the momentum of a conviction that God is over all and in all, that He is with us, that the duty He assigns us is possible. We may get stimulus and reinforcement from ideals that we abstract from humanity, but they are no substitute for the living God.

Pastoral theology there can be none, and pastoral work will be insecure, without this bottom rock of faith in God. Remember that in the decaying Roman and Greek worlds there was a Stoic moral idealism as noble as man has ever formed; but Judaism, not wholly lovely, with its unconquerable faith that

“verily there is a God that judgeth the earth,” stood strong, when all around tottered, and attracted many of the finest souls. And it was not moral idealism which gave life to the Christian faith that sprang out of Judaism, but the intense faith in God revealed in Jesus, Christ as our Father and our Saviour.

I have spoken, you may think, at undue length on this point. But I desire to impress on you that your generation will be called on to check rather than to reinforce this reaction in the intellectual world of which I spoke—the reaction from an excessive dogmatism, unrelieved by a perspective of great and small, into a moral idealism with no formulated faith at all.

The truth is in neither extreme. The pastor will find that the strength and grip of religion on men lies neither in the curious piling up of authoritative dogma and symbolical rite, nor in the attempted avoidance of all dogma, and the making religion a mere emotional or rational statement of ideal morality, an abstraction of our own; but in a strong, reasonable, and reasoned faith in

God our Father as an object of knowledge, and reverence, and service, and love, whose kingdom on earth is the one thing worth working for. We may question the extent of our knowledge of God, question the extent and method of His self-revelation, but it is on his ultimate faith in God and His government of the world that the pastor's strength depends.

This being made clear, I can go on to speak of other convictions of the Christian pastor. One is ever present with him, the distinctive mark of the pastoral spirit—the conviction that “every one has,” as it is said, “a soul to be saved.” This means that in every child of man is the germ and seed of a divine and heavenly life, destined to struggle for its existence and perfection, and that it is our privilege to study and labour to help that germ to grow. The philosophers express it by insisting that all men have worth—that each man is an end in himself. To state this is to carry conviction of its truth; but to keep it in mind, and to give effect to it, and to add to it the belief that each man is an end not only to himself, but to



God, is another matter. It ought to make us review our pastoral methods—what shall we teach, and how? In science there is advance; it is cumulative, nothing is lost. But the art of life, of self-management, of moral law—why is not this more cumulative? How much of the Bible is the sum of experience? It must be taught as experience, and we must add to that experience. As scientific knowledge is acquired by man's own effort, so the moral laws that mould and govern men and nations are learnt by our effort. We must study our methods and principles. Pastoral life affords a magnificent field for such work; but let no one think that the mechanical adoption of some one else's methods, or the association of the soundest principles, will avail much. It is the sincerity of faith in God and of sympathy with man—it is that quality of soul that finds its natural expression in prayer to God and love of man—that makes the true pastor.

Another ever-present conviction of the Christian pastor is that the Christian faith is the great permanent factor in human progress,

and that in working for it, he is working in the main path of human development, working with God, in accordance with the eternal laws of God, and is necessarily on the winning side. All his knowledge of other religions, and much else that he knows, will deepen and strengthen this conviction, and give him persistency. For the Christian faith is essentially a belief in our relationship to God as His children, in our participation of His eternal Life, and in our actually holding communion with Him. Hence in this faith we can, as God does, make present and future one, and, therefore, work for the future by that slow process which, looked at from outside by those who are not taking part in the work, is called evolution, but seen from God's point of view is His will and His purpose. We may make that will and purpose ours.

There is another conviction that is so essential that I cannot pass it over. If the pastor is to be strenuous in his work, a true watchman, he must have a profound sense of sin, both national and personal. I believe that without this sense of sin his teaching must be shallow and lack seriousness. We

must not shrink from the painful and humiliating thought that sinfulness affects ourselves through and through, crippling, limiting, damaging, all we say and do. Only thus can we help others to feel their own sin, and the cruel hold sin has on them, and, therefore, to welcome the new life, and the hope and the power to rise out of sin, that Christ has brought. Nothing else will give us real humility, the most distinctive, the most supernatural, of the Christian virtues. It will never come to us except from the sense of sin.

The pastor is also a teacher, and he ought to be a good teacher. He ought to study and realise the value of educational methods. I am not going to speak now about methods of teaching, in the pulpit or elsewhere, and will only make one remark on the special aim of the teaching which belongs to the pastor. What is that aim? It is not to give proofs of doctrines, such as are given in schools of theology. It is not primarily to give knowledge. Bishop Creighton expressed it admirably (Charge, 21st February 1900):

“To train up our people to a sense of their responsibility as Christians, and to set forth Christian truth as something which must be apprehended from within, and must work out its fruits in a strong and steadfast character.” It is “that they may have life, and have it more abundantly.” That is the great secret. Did you ever notice the complete absence of constraint and compulsion in our Lord’s training of the Twelve? You should read *Pastor Pastorum*, by the late Master of Trinity Hall, to help you to see this. And the result was that the Twelve turned out so individual, such men, so inspired, men with strength. May we not say that our Lord treated them all with great respect? He is the model of teachers. God gives to each his own personality, deep below the signs we see; and that personality grows by liberty, by liberty and trust. Trust the divine in each, and it will respond to your trust. We come back to the need of profound respect for our people, as we “set forth Christian truth as something which must be apprehended from within.” If you once master the thought that each of those whom you are teaching will

carry on the study through life, you will be more anxious to lay foundations on which it will be a joy for him to build, than to complete a little chamber, the narrowness of which may soon disgust him with all theology.

If you keep this aim steadily before you, you will not weaken and dull your intellect and your conscience, and those of your hearers, by the constant repetition, so familiar, so deadly, of "The Church directs us," "The Church teaches," and similar phrases. They may be true; but it is thoroughly bad and deadening teaching from the point of view of spiritual education. It does not stimulate and strengthen; it numbs and lulls the spiritual consciousness. Aim at "the apprehension from within," and the expression in action, and give your people the joy of finding out that they are thus attaining to the true spirit of the Church. It makes all the difference whether you tell your hearers that something is true because the Church teaches it, or that the Church teaches it because it is true, and that they "know of their own selves" that it is true. So teach that they shall desire to learn more: let them hear the

waves of the infinite ocean of truth, of that truth which inspires to duty.

The pastor should be a teacher, to interest, to awaken, to lift, to inspire. For nearly all his congregation the Sunday sermon is their one opportunity in the week to get this inspiration. The pastor must never forget that in every soul before him is the divine Life *in esse* or *in posse*. Behind those irresponsive, immobile faces, sermon-proof as they seem, from which nothing could excite a sparkle, is the soul to be lifted, and being lifted, into a larger air. Some possess a depth of feeling, unexpressed, inexpressible, of which you can form no measure. Infinite variety of temperament; but what a unity! The same divine soul, the same eternal yearning, the same way of life and way of death before each, the same need of loving guidance to choose the right path. How much of the Bible, especially of the Psalms, is on the art of living rightly and wisely; how much we need that art; how many of us have "forsaken the fountains of living water to hew out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." And it is the one opportunity for

teaching the people how to observe our Lord's commands. We have to hand down, to illustrate, to readapt, our Lord's sayings, which are in fact fundamental rules of life. We have to teach that divine revelation of which the Psalmist speaks—the Law of the Lord, that revelation in the human heart which “fulfils the same part in the world of spirits as the sun does in the world of nature”<sup>1</sup> You have to translate into language that fits the mental aptitudes and habits of your people whatever you have to say on God and man and duty.

I have now explained that the word pastoral implies an ever-renewed life, reality, and progress in your theology, as you learn from the spiritual experiences of your people, while that theology itself is founded on the experience and revelation of the past: I have shown that moral idealism, while it may lead to faith in God, is no adequate and final substitute for that faith; the pastor needs an absolute conviction of God: and I have spoken of other fundamental convictions of the pastor, that

<sup>1</sup> *The Psalms, in three Collections*, by E. G. King, D.D. Deighton, Bell and Co. An excellent work.

every one has a soul in which the divine Life dwells, that Christianity is essential to national as well as to individual life, and that our failures are not failures only, but sins. I added a few words on our opportunities for teaching, and our special aim at developing individual strength and character ; and now only one word remains to be said.

There is one more essential, the feeling of the duty, the necessity of self-consecration. On this subject one must needs speak, if one speaks at all, with deep humility. Of all the elements that go to make the pastor, this is the most essential. He can do without much learning, indeed without any other obvious qualification ; but not without this feeling of the necessity of personal holiness, and life in Christ, to fit him to be the guide and the comfort of others. "For their sakes I sanctify myself," said the Master ; and how much more must His disciples !

Perhaps some of you may regard the life of self-consecration as that of a recluse, of an unpractical person. It is not so, as a matter of fact, among the clergy. It is your practical,



busy, undevout man who does not get the real things done, and makes much noise over the not doing of them; and I mean by the real things, the building up of Christ-like lives: and it is your man of prayer and holiness in whose parish things move quietly on—ὡς ῥεῦμα ἐλαίου ἀψοφητὶ ῥέοντος, as Plato says—and a spirit of holiness is ever present. Is it Mary or Martha that does the work of the parish? Think of Westcott: no one could have called him a man of affairs; and what bishop of our day so influenced affairs? “Influence is the power that distils from a life that is lived in communion with God.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Personal Life of the Clergy*, by Canon A. W. Robinson. Longmans.



## LECTURE II

## ABSTRACT

### SOCIAL QUESTIONS

INFLUENCE of religious ideals on national welfare. Hence a wide field for usefulness open to the pastor.

The terribly unfavourable conditions of life. What clergy can do indirectly affecting these. The necessity and the hopefulness of work in social matters.

Difficulty of interesting the well-to-do classes. A chief cause is the lack of a strong and simple and true popular theology.

A new ideal needed for industrial and commercial and social life. This must come from theology.

Wherein the popular theology is defective.

The simpler theology of early Christianity.

What its effects may again be.

This is the pastoral theology to which the Church is called.

## II

### PASTORAL THEOLOGY IN ITS BEARING ON NATIONAL PROGRESS AND WELFARE

IN my first lecture I spoke of the nature of pastoral theology and of the pastor's qualifications, mainly with reference to the bearing of our work on individual souls. To-day I wish to speak of its bearing on national welfare.

Some of you, I doubt not, are fired with an ambition and resolve to leave our country as a whole a little better for your having lived. Now I believe that there is no path open to so many, and so full of opportunities for doing this, as the life of a man in Holy Orders. This may seem a daring assertion. It will seem less so when you recall the well-known passage from the opening paragraph of our greatest modern work on Economics, by Professor Marshall.

“ Man’s character,” he says, “ has been moulded by his everyday work, and by the material resources which he thereby procures, more than by any other influence, unless it be that of his religious ideals ; in fact, the two great forming agencies of the world’s history have been the religious and the economic.” Now if there is any position in the world which gives one a chance of lifting the “ religious ideals,” and thus of strengthening one of “ the two great forming agencies of the world’s history,” it is that of the pastoral ministry. True that one may do this work in any calling. But in other callings we may leave it undone without having entirely missed our mark. Not so if our calling is to the ministry of the Church.

At first, as I have said, our thoughts of the ministry gather round ideals for individuals. We will endeavour to awaken and stimulate in men the sense that they are the children of God ; to teach them the joy of using all their faculties of body, soul, and spirit ; the self-respect and dignity and the kindness to others that mark true manhood ; and we will look forward hopefully to the uplifting of the soul

to God, the loyalty to our Lord, and the sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit. In school, in church, and in the daily influence of life, our aim must be to make "the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God"—the fact of God's loving Fatherhood—a real power in every one's life.

I need not say that this is an essential part of pastoral work. We have primarily to deal with the awakening of men's souls. No social work is more fertile and more lasting than this.

But we soon find the terrible limitations placed on our dealing with individuals. It is obvious enough that in our physical and social life we are intimately and vitally connected with the past and the present; heredity, and the continuity of tradition and manners and morals, are an immense power; and we learn that our moral and spiritual life is only slightly more individual, slightly more independent of its environment, than is our physical life. It is so intimately bound up with the moral and spiritual ideals of those among whom we live that it can scarcely rise above them; and these

in their turn are alike the causes and the consequences of the physical conditions of life. How unfavourable many of these conditions are among large sections of our people we cannot fail to see. So our thoughts lead us to another view of the pastoral functions of the Church. We come to see that one of the great and indispensable functions of the Church, and therefore of our ministry, should be to inspire men with a thought of God and man which shall be utterly inconsistent with acquiescence in any demoralising conditions of life. We of all men must not give way to the thought that things are in a vicious circle, which one can get hold of nowhere. We clergy can get firm hold of them at one point. Truer thoughts of God and of man—of God as the Father, of man as the child; of God dwelling in man; in man as he is now, body and soul—a union which the doctrines of the Resurrection and the Ascension forbid us to regard as a purely temporary alliance—these are the beginning. They were the beginning of the revelation made in Christ; they fired men then with new hopes, and they have not now lost their power, though



men may have lost faith in them. They are the beginning, and to teach them is our work. Then follow ideals for man which necessitate the improvement of the material conditions of his life. "The two great world-forming agencies," remember, "are the religious and the economic." The religious force, the uplifting power of a religious ideal, based on a true and inspiring theology, is the only force capable of counteracting the evils that flow from unchecked economic forces. No considerations of individual or national interest and expediency—no necessities for "educating our masters," or of "holding our own in international competition," have a fraction of the power of a religious faith. History is a closed book to us if it does not teach us this.

Take one brief glance at these evils as they are at this day among us, I do not say unchecked, but quite insufficiently checked. To realise the present conditions of life among large classes in our cities is not easy for any of us. It requires study, it requires observation, and it requires above all a very tender human sympathy. I can only tell you briefly that the

conditions of industry are such that there is a large margin of men in every town so irregularly employed, as to become demoralised and ultimately unemployable; that the slum-life of our cities, and the conditions of much labour, are training up generation after generation of boys and girls enfeebled in physique, in intelligence, and in character; so crowded in their dwellings that decency is impossible; so insufficiently fed that they cannot be efficient workers with body or mind; so fettered in choice of work that they must take what comes first or tramp; so hopeless and joyless in home-life, that drink and gambling and immoral pleasures present irresistible attractions. These pleasures are the only relief. "Men must have a maintenance," says Aristotle, "before they can practise virtue." You must realise that elementary education is doing very little as yet to remedy this physical and social degradation of the lowest class, and of classes just above the lowest, or even to prevent the growth of an unemployable class. It has prevented matters from becoming much worse, but that is all. By itself it has no inspiring power. It is not

necessarily itself inspired with love, which alone can inspire and regenerate others. You must realise the immense power of an organised liquor traffic, commanding boundless capital, enlisting the support of some decent people who are tempted to take shares, debasing here and there the conscience of magistrates, police, and the general public, as well as spreading universally the temptation to drink, and all the miserable demoralisation that follows drink. You must realise that a very large proportion of the labouring class, especially in our large cities, has no relation whatever to public worship in church or chapel, nor even to any Sunday school; that many districts of our great towns are crowded with people whose whole energies, enfeebled as they are, are taken up with living at all. The total amount of wealth produced is enormous, and yet Mr. Charles Booth tells us that 30.7 per cent of the population of London live in "poverty"; and Mr. Seebohm Rowntree, after an exhaustive examination of the population of York, finds that 27.84 of the people are in "poverty." Think what these numbers imply. "Poverty," in Mr. Rowntree's technical

use of the word, means insufficiency of food, clothing, warmth, shelter, fresh air, and cleanliness to maintain physical efficiency. It means inability to do a good day's work. "Poverty" means ceaseless insecurity as to the future: it means the deprivation of all minor enjoyments and recreations and amenities of life that come from possessing "a margin." There is no "margin" for them. Think what such a life must be! How, under these circumstances, can there be the full fruits of the Spirit? All life other than a feeble physical flicker, an acuteness born of struggle, and a patience born of suffering, is rendered impossible, except in rare instances of unconquerable mental vitality. Every candidate for Holy Orders ought to read at least Seebohm Rowntree's book.

Every clergyman can do something towards the solution of social questions; and we may be well assured that these questions will occupy the mind of the nation in the coming decades to an extent that we do not now realise.

It is outside the scope of these lectures to go into any detail; I can only here emphasise

to each of you the words: *Nihil humani a te alienum puta*. As teachers we are not limited to teaching about the things of the mind, or of the next world. Any and all knowledge will be useful. As pastors we are pastors of body and mind. As evangelists it is as much our duty to prepare the ground for the seed, as to sow the seed in the ground. Everything that affects the well-being of our people must be our care. We shall find that life and other calls will of themselves impose enough limitations on us, and prevent us from becoming busy-bodies or amateur sanitary inspectors and reformers; but I wish to make it plain that there is nothing that affects the welfare of our people which we ought not to know about and take active interest in. It may also be possible, but it is not easy, to get to know something of the inner working of such great organisations as Trades Unions, Friendly Societies, Co-operative Societies, about which most of us are as ignorant as of what goes on in Nigeria. It is impossible to teach the working man till you begin to learn from him; and he has much to teach an ardent learner.

Each one of us also can do something by example. He should set the example of a life ordered by a spiritual principle, and show its value. We know how example is emphasised in our ordination service—that we are to be “wholesome and godly examples and patterns for our people to follow.” We have not only to “sanctify our lives,” but to “fashion” them after the rule of Christ. So we must constantly think of what this rule requires. It is not easy to decide the limits of simplicity of personal life. But we are bound to show that we do not want wealth or luxuries, except in so far as they make us better members of society. The social questions in which we pastors are absolutely bound to interest ourselves are such as the following:—Problems and facts of poverty; Charity Organisation principles; the Church Army and its labour homes; the Salvation Army and its shelters; the Temperance problem and its gradual solution; the Housing Question. This last is becoming daily more serious, and is vitally affecting the well-being of the nation. An overcrowded house leaves no room for morality

or religion. In many places a Christian Social Union is formed for the joint study among lay and clergy of these matters. It is not at all needful that we should often make public utterances on these subjects; but our knowledge of them will show, and greatly increase, both our sympathy and our usefulness, and save us from many mistakes. The care of the poor and the sick, whether under the poor-law guardians or not; protection of children; care of defective children—all are our business. Who is to inspire a society to good citizenship if not the pastor? In every town there are openings for fresh progress which we ought to be the first to see, and to suggest to others. Never try to get the credit for these things: so long as they are done, be content. The blind, or the deaf and dumb, are not looked after in the town? Then make it your business first to get the very best advice as to the principles on which a society should work for them. There is already great experience; there are excellent workers: find them out. Then get personal knowledge of the cases; then pick your men and women who can and will carry on this

work, and when it is launched, leave it. So, too, your town may want district nurses, or free baths for school-children, or swimming instruction, or gymnasia, or playing-fields. Follow the same plan. But if there is any drudgery to be done, do it.

Men must judge for themselves in each case how far it is well to connect these organisations with the Church. Sometimes it will provoke jealousy and do harm; but in any case they must get their inspiration from the Christian spirit. And when such organisations are on an avowedly religious basis, they are as great a help to religion as religion is to them. Think of such organisations as the Girls' Friendly Society, and Communicants' Guilds, St. Andrew's Brotherhood, and the Church Lads' Brigade. How they gain by being at once religious and active. It is a great gain to boys' clubs to have voluntary Bible classes connected with them. Mothers' Meetings, the Mothers' Union, Mens' Unions, etc., for the promotion of good family life, are most useful. Men and women will tolerate gentle suggestions for the good of their children, and find that they are



for their own good too. I have said nothing of schools—our interest in these is too great and too obvious.

The pastor also should know what are the influences that are degrading his people. There are all sorts of contrivances to induce women and boys, as well as men, to drink in public-houses; there are clubs which are little better than dens of immorality; wine-lodges are much the same. There are the low, if not absolutely indecent, papers circulated among children. The pastor must have his eyes open, and then his heart will be moved, and he will find the work of his life so interesting that he will wonder why everybody does not try to flock into it. At fifty he will feel like thirty, and at seventy like forty. He will wish that a day had forty-eight hours, and a week fourteen days; he will wish he was infinitely better read, cleverer, quicker than he is, and only regret that he leaves so much untouched, and that he will die before he sees more than a fragment done of what might be done.

I do not here enter on the question what

direct part clergy ought to take in urging social reforms. All such reforms are closely bound up with social, economical, and legislative questions, often of a very highly technical kind. As clergy we have no special knowledge of these questions which entitles us to speak with authority, and if we touch these matters in the pulpit we are felt at once to be taking an unfair advantage of "Coward's Castle." We ought, however, to keep before ourselves and our people the existence of these evils and their terrible consequences, and constantly show how by our own personal actions each man can do something to lessen them. We must show that we feel, as Plato said, that "doing injustice is a greater evil than suffering it." We must make it clear that Christianity is a life, not a creed only; and that Christianity is really on its trial: can it, or can it not, grapple with the evils of a commercial and industrial age and nation? I, for one, am sure that it cannot, unless it inspires far more of respect for all men as truly our brothers in Christ than it has yet inspired in our nation. We clergy cannot accept the present relation of

classes as according with the mind of Christ. We resist selfish individualism, and if we are not prepared to accept socialism as a political and economical programme for reform, it must be because we insist no less than socialists on brotherhood and mutual service as an all-pervading voluntary principle in business transactions as in all domestic relations. And we must not despair of this. What wonderful changes last century—to take only that short period—saw in the tone and aims of our Church. Within your lifetime you may witness—you may assist in bringing about—a still greater revolution. Some day—why not soon?—we shall see in Christ's constant use of His power to relieve the suffering of men, a direct call to use all our wonderful resources of science, and intelligence, and love, in the bettering of our social conditions. Surely an age of practical religion, of applied religion, will set in. The world is crying out for a new type of Christian, ardent in faith and love to his Master, and therefore devoting himself, whether in or out of Holy Orders, as Christ did, to bearing and healing the infirmities of others. I know what noble

work young clergymen can do and have done in Lancashire.

There is one branch of work in this direction to which perhaps a clergyman is specially called, and for which he has special opportunities: I mean to form, or present, a comprehensive, synthetical view of social questions. He is presumably a man of some general education. He ought to be able to master the interdependence of the varied social, educational, and religious questions, so as to keep them collectively before the minds of his people. He will find men who will give themselves to specific branches of the work. Let him try to make men realise how all are connected. He should be a moderating influence against one-sided views, but a stimulating influence for progress as a whole.

And there is another class at the other end of our social scale, which is at least as much demoralised by self-indulgence and aimless luxury as the poorest are by their poverty. And their demoralisation profoundly affects all the middle class—all of us. We ourselves individually have been and are affected by

the general indifference and hostility to any legislative measures on a comprehensive scale, for improving our public-house and licensing system, and for controlling the drink traffic ; for dealing effectively with the housing and land questions, which are so closely connected with other curses of the great cities. Nothing excites more furious dislike than any attempt to interfere with men's vices, unless, it may be, an attempt to curtail their profits. But it is not only those whose profits or pleasures are involved who disclaim any sympathy with the aspirations of the labouring class for a more human home ; it is often the religious and semi-religious middle class who appear to grudge any rise in the standard of life in the class below. The general attitude of Christian people to social work and progress is very unchristian. We must be perfectly well aware that we ourselves find it very hard to maintain our faith in any ideals for national life ; that we are infected by the apathy of the leisured class ; that the most ardent reformers of national life do not usually regard either clergy or the leisured class of Christian people as their

natural allies. Until we realise that our apathy and aloofness are a sin, of which we need daily to repent, among the things we have left undone that we ought to have done, we must be regarded as foes, not as friends.

Now you must get to know and to feel the national peril and distress, not of course in order that you may be always taking part in political and municipal agitations, but that you may be saved from the sin and shame of drifting, through social sympathy with the unawakened, unideal class to which you belong, into an ignorant, contented indifference, or even active hostility, to the aspirations among the best and the few for diminishing these evils. Our profession is not the slightest guarantee against this sin and shame. It was not the clergy, as a rule, who urged the protection of little children against overwork in the mills half a century ago, or who have agitated for reform in unhealthy trades, and in the conditions of labour for women and children. Most of the clergy in the southern states of the United States of America up to the last defended slavery. Remember that we may be as blind as

they, and bring no less disgrace on our office. It is one of the dangers of our profession that we should be more in sympathy with the social conservatism of the well-to-do than with aspirations for bettering the conditions of life of the poor, and that we should let subscriptions blind our eyes, lose sensitiveness to moral wrongs, and be cowardly in speaking of them.

When I speak of a true and inspiring theology as the only force capable of counteracting the degrading forces constantly at work, I am not thinking of the theology of the professor, but the theology of the ratepayer and taxpayer and newspaper reader, the average popular thought about God. It is this that ultimately determines the trend of public sentiment and action, and it is this which it is our special duty as pastors and educators to purify and elevate and strengthen. We have to translate theology into the language of the people. The result is pastoral theology.

Wherever a strong and simple thought of God, and of God's relation to man—that is, a strong theology—enters into a man's mind, and through him seizes on a body of men, or a

nation, it has a directive and compelling effect in bringing all their aims and purposes and wills into line with one another. Such thought acts like a magnet on a box of iron filings; they leap into position, they transmit its power. Out of disorder arises order, out of particularism unity. The wills of men are then ordered, directed, marshalled, by an attraction towards an Unseen Power—a religious ideal. Such is the result of a theology. There is no such co-ordinating power in the world as this.

To give one instance only, I will take the theology of Mahomet, that prophet, mystic, theologian, soldier, who arose to scourge the degenerate Eastern Christianity of the seventh century. His intense conviction of the nature and will of God filled his whole being, and its precision fascinated and convinced the men of his age. He and his caliphs were irresistible. It was their theology that tipped their spears with steel. Had not creed met creed, theology met theology, with a faith and chivalry equal to their own, Mahometanism would have overpowered Western Christendom. Theology determined social progress and



world-history in those days. It is equally powerful now.

Now, must we not say that the popular English theology of to-day is degenerate, or almost evanescent? Have we not as a nation, in our ordinary business life, come to think God so remote as to be negligible? Have we not as a nation settled down to the belief that, for all practical purposes, we are left to our own devices; and that God educates us, as some one has put it, by leaving us strictly to ourselves? It is this negative theology, this *laissez-faire* theology, which makes possible our silent acquiescence in conditions which are so fearfully unfavourable to all higher life. The degradation of character that comes with inability to find work, the slums of a city, the wasting weariness of unhealthy trades, the yearly massacre of children, the savage indifference of us all to the welfare of those who create our comforts, are all tolerable to such a no-theology as this, but are intolerable to a real belief in God. Can any one doubt that this no-theology is the theology of the nation, and that the utter

weakness of this no-theology is the cause of the absence of any high ideals of national life?

Now, here our first thought may be: "Yes, this is the theology or no-theology of the *nation*. But it is not the theology of the *Church*. The theology of the Church, some one will say, always has been, and still is, the great agency for purifying and elevating that no-theology of the nation. That is our *raison d'être*. Our work as clergy is marked out for us: it is deplorably ineffective, we admit; but we can only follow on the lines so clearly and authoritatively laid down in the Prayer Book, and leave the result to God."

Here we come near the root of the matter. It is not possible, I think, to over-estimate what Christianity did for us in the earlier ages of our national history, under very different political and social conditions. It was the one restraining force, the one source of ideals of life, the one influence that kept the spiritual world before men, that defended the weak, that awed the strong. It was the uniting influence in the nation, as well as the training, the ennobling, and the educating influence. The

Church was the soul, the conscience, the poetry, the art, the home, the school of all the ideals of the nation. The very stones in its ruins cry out that they owe their undying beauty to the faith in God which inspired their building. But can we say that it is so now? And if not, why not? We must face this question. If we look impartially at its more recent history, we shall not be able to maintain that the Church, even in its widest sense, along with a continued influence for good on individual life, has to an equal extent determined or inspired the ideals of modern social and industrial evolution. Surely we must acknowledge this. We have great resisting, but comparatively little inspiring, power. The Church of England in particular has great dignity, a splendid position; but we must recognise that this dignity is due to bygone historical causes, and that its splendid position was given to it because of its splendid service under other conditions. Civilisation has perhaps done more for the Church, of late years, than the Church has done for civilisation. But this need not be always so. "He that doth serve" becomes

great; and our greatness can only be maintained by "service," and by the full recognition of all who "serve."

There surely is a new ideal urgently needed—the ideal of industrial and commercial life. Into this life all the masses of our people are swept. Religious life cannot be kept apart from it, and confined to our churches and our personal devotions. Industrial and commercial life—yes, and the life also of recreation and society—must be penetrated with some Christian ideal, if the kingdom of God is not to be regarded as a mere dream. Our pastoral work brings us face to face with this life, which is, however, entrenched behind a barrier, and most difficult to touch. Pastoral theology must find a passage through this barrier, unless it is to acquiesce in its impotence. We suffer from cowardice, from ignorance, from unwillingness to touch difficult subjects. We suffer also from the prevailing use of seventeenth-century English in religious teaching. It seems to be thought that the language of the clergy, like their dress, ought to be different from that of other people. It is this that is in

part responsible for the divorce of religion from common life.

Our lack of inspiring power is, however, primarily due to the prevalence among ourselves of an unworthy and feebly-held theology, which has enfeebled and dissipated our wills and aims; and if the Church is once more to affect social progress, it must begin by purifying and ennobling its own theology, and thus generating the force of love and self-sacrifice. We have to go to the very root of the matter.

The conception of God the Father as a supreme Transcendent Being, as Ruler and Judge, has in the past too much concentrated men's thoughts on His absolute power, confused men's sense of divine justice, and lowered their sense of human worth. It created, as we feel (for we too are affected by this theology) an infinite gap between God and ourselves, and presented Him to us as complacently contemplating human misery in this world and the next. Wherever the doctrine of God's absolute power and transcendence is held predominantly, it lowers man's respect and hopefulness for

man. The thought of such a God overpowers and numbs the mind. It tends to make men first fatalistic and acquiescent, and finally materialistic and unbelieving. Suffering and misery and sin come to be regarded as God's will. Even the work of the Redeemer in popular theology has scarcely corrected this. His work of redemption has been represented as a transaction in the Divine counsels to save a fraction of a humanity utterly lost ; and men have thought they did Christ the more honour by glorifying the vengeance of God, and magnifying the sinfulness of men. I cannot doubt that such a theology, which has long been at the core of the popular thought of God, has retarded social progress by diminishing man's hopefulness, by lowering his sense of dignity, and his responsibility. It at once took away man's power and motive for work, and made men less worth working for ; and we are at this hour suffering from this double paralysis—a paralysis of spiritual energy, and a paralysis of hopeful motive. Men's minds have been wholly diverted from the Messianic hope of a kingdom of God on earth. This is the reason why so

much of the virile mind and heart of the country is outside our Church and all Churches.

I know it may be argued that this is not the theology of the Church ; some one may even be found to say that it never was the theology of the Church. But it is the theology which the people have learned from the Church. They have mastered and absorbed but little, but they have mastered and absorbed this,—that according to us our chief duty is to get to Heaven, and that there is some easier way of getting to Heaven than by doing the will of God and loving our brother. We are, indeed, quite willing to love our brother if it costs us nothing—even if it can be done by proxy for a small subscription. But our teaching has not culminated in brotherly action. We have lent ourselves to this illusion, or acquiesced in it for want of clear insight into something better.

Now, I believe this to be a passing phase of theology in our national history, in which generations are but as days in a man's life. It is not the theology of Christ ; it is not the vital part of the theology of the Church ; and it rests with your generation to prove that it is

not the theology of the true teachers of our Church; but the fact remains that this is the residuum which has survived in men's memories when the rest, which many of us try to teach, is forgotten. Brotherliness, to sum it up in that word, is forgotten, because it is but a purple patch placed on a system which seems complete, and has been taught as complete, without it.

Let me then try to give you some outline of what I think is the theology of Christ and His Church, the universal theology of the future, if not of the present—the theology which is nevertheless directing, though often unfelt and unformulated, some of the great tidal social movements of our time, largely outside Church influences—the pastoral theology, in a word, in which I find my hope for England, and which I would fain see inspiring every class.

To put it in briefest form, Christ teaches us to honour and respect every man as in some sense an embodiment and a potential representation of the Divine. Theology at its truest testifies to human worth and human capabilities. It is all summed up again and again in St. Paul's



phrases, but they seem almost to have lost their meaning to us by repetition, and by the overpowering prejudice in favour of a theology which almost overlooks them. What does St. Paul mean when he speaks of the "one God and Father of all, who is above all, *and through all, and in all*"? What does he mean by saying that "to each one of us is given grace according to the gift of Christ"? or by speaking of this mystery now at last made known, of "Christ in you the hope of glory," and his hope to "present every man perfect in Christ"? or of Christ being "revealed in" himself? If these phrases, and many others, like coins long worn, have lost their original impress, and are now mere tokens, it is our duty to remind them, to fill them with life. And not only they, but the whole New Testament enforces this teaching—that man's worth is infinite, just because he is the child of God, and has in him something of that Divine Fatherhood.

This was the theology that moved the first generation of Christians. And surely no illustration can be given from history of the effect

of a theology on social progress to compare with this, the preaching of Christ and its effect on the world. Take what view men will of the nature of Christ, and of revelation, still this is undeniable, that it was a theology, a distinct doctrine about God, and of man's relation to Him, that inspired with passionate faith and feeling and love the early Christians, nerved them to efforts, to devotion, supported them in persecution and in what seemed hopeless combats with a world of evil. It was a theology that in this instance determined social progress, that put down the cruelty of the amphitheatre, the infanticide, the unnatural and bestial crimes, the slavery, the wrongs of women and children, and other evils of those times. It was theology: it was the thought of God as "the Father of all, above all, and through all, and in all"; as a loving Father; and of our own human race as His children in union with His Son. It was this thought that brought into line the noblest aspirations among men; and we cannot imagine that without such a theology such results could ever have been attained. If ever there was a pastoral theology it was this.

And what is of still more importance, it is this theology, formulated or unformulated, that is the moving force of civilisation and progress to-day. I believe that below all the dogmas of theology, among people who know nothing of dogmas, there are stirring thoughts which are strictly theological, *i.e.* express views as to the nature of God, and His relation to man. It may be ours as pastors to bring these thoughts to the birth, by giving them distinct expression. There is no nobler task. It is to bring out the latent religion of our democracy. This is the pastoral theology I commend to you. Surely it is this to which you are called.

And thus finally I come to the question what may be the effect of such a theology on social progress in the future—of a theology which spiritualises society by spiritualising and glorifying the human unit, and recognising it as united to the incarnate Saviour.

One of Carlyle's greatest sayings was that the conflict of the future lay not between the Tory and the Radical, but between the believers and the unbelievers. Similar sayings might

be quoted from Mazzini, Emerson, and many others.

Think what a vista this opens. It means that in the fullest sense, as Mazzini said, "every political question is a religious question"; that "not till democracy becomes a religious movement can it hope to carry the victory." It means further that social evolution and progress are bound up with the prevalence of a noble faith. Just so far as the English people, as a whole, have a grand ideal of personal and national life, an ideal necessarily and inherently religious, so far will our progress be steady and well directed and secure, in making the life of the masses more worthy, more noble, and more happy. Surely this ideal should come from us pastors. What we need is the acceptance of St. Paul's grand and simple doctrine of "Christ in men." I believe the world is ready to receive it, and I believe the Church, in its widest sense—"those who call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord"—is almost ready to give it; and will give it when her eyes are opened to the lack of power in all

messages which have not this "Word of Life" for their centre.

Can no one whose life is touched with a heavenly flame arise to tell us all that is meant by the Fatherhood of God, to convince us that our lives are guided to a far-off goal by a loving Will, and that we too are the instruments of God—His only instruments—in carrying out His purposes of justice and nobleness and love, and making His kingdom? We want to feel that all that is best in us is the work of God in us, and is therefore the strongest, stronger than all evil; that all evil can be remedied by the one divine remedy, love. The one supreme dogma of this theology is that God is our Father: the one supreme rule is that new commandment, "See that ye love one another." When we look for it, we see this theology all around us. There is a love, even now at work among men, which bears and heals the sin and wickedness around it; which conquers bigotries and jealousies and selfishness; which makes suffering and sorrow tolerable, and heralds the dawn of the kingdom of love. You cannot

work in a parish for long with open heart and human sympathy without feeling the power of this widespread, silent, deep, unorganised theology of goodness.

If such a theology could be imagined as simultaneously seizing on a whole town, a whole church, a whole nation, and becoming self-conscious, vocal—a belief that it is God's will that all wrongs should be righted, and that the law of love, as between brothers, should be universal; that each should seek the good of others, crave the hardest work, the least advantage for self, with as single an eye for the salvation of the world as that of Christ Himself, and in this work should find his happiness—then the kingdom of God would be here. But this is theology, pastoral theology.

I believe that the theology, as it stands, of our Church of England is true, and that it contains all this, but that it is often lifelessly held, and is often disproportionately presented. The Sacraments presuppose and perfectly embody it. The Catechism is full of it, if we have eyes to see. In our Creeds, as they stand, though

they are expressed in terms of Greek philosophy, and cast in a mould unfamiliar to our age, there is found the truth we need, if we will but look for it. We must not throw away the old, but see the new, which is really the oldest of all, the nucleus of all within. The new will not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

The faith in the Incarnation is more than a belief in the Divine Sonship of Jesus Christ; it is a faith that human nature finds its goal and consummation in Christ, and is even now and universally a potential manifestation of the Divine. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." The historic faith in Christ as the revealer of God in His words and works, in His all-sacrificing love, is not a worn-out faith, but one full of power at this day. If we are all to be brought into line, with a passionate desire for social progress, and an enthusiasm that burns up all jealousies, it will be by the love of Christ, the personal love for a personal as well as an ideal Christ, filling all hearts.

And the faith in the Holy Spirit is the belief that the impulses towards goodness which

we all feel are a link to God Himself, and spring from a source other than, and yet working in, our own personality. It is this that gives power, and patience, and toleration, and mutual respect. This wonderful world of men is the sphere of the Spirit, and we must beware lest we be found fighting against God.

Therefore, in conclusion, it is to the theology of to-day, purified of lower and mistaken views of God, simplified, intensified, penetrated by scientific thought, that I look as the main engine and power for social progress. No mere mutual struggles inspired by selfishness will make a world of love; no checks or counterchecks will eliminate dishonesty and tyranny and oppression; no shuffling of dirty cards will make a clean pack. No mechanism of institutions and societies; no education by codes and systems, can effect anything without the fire within. It needs the inspiration of an ideal from without to direct and co-ordinate human effort towards a noble end, and this ideal is nothing else than a noble pastoral theology.

Have faith in this ideal, in the universal presence of the spark of divine life. Some



day these sparks shall leap into continuous flame, and then the kingdom of God will have come to all.

What a work lies open to the pastoral theology of the future! It is not merely national progress. It is to win for Christ the leadership in the philosophical thought and practice of the world. It is assuredly true that the thought of our new century seems to be moving away from the belief of the last century, that in the study of physical nature and her laws all mysteries could be solved. Everything, our poetry, philosophy, science, literature, converge on man as the being in whom the answer to the riddle of the universe is to be found. Such too is the teaching of theology; that it is in man, regarded as the child of God, rather than in nature, that we are to look for the purpose of creation; and theology adds that if in man, then most clearly in our Lord Jesus Christ. If we clergy are now faithful we may do something: we may help to draw the nation's eyes to Christ as verily the Way, the Truth, and the Life; and what nobler, what more patriotic aim can

we put before ourselves than this? In such pastoral theology—that is, in philosophy applied to the supreme problem of bettering human life, and expressed in language that can be understood of all—lies the great motive power of human progress. It is to this pastorate that you are called.

## LECTURE III

## ABSTRACT

The importance to the Church of the study of philosophy.

Every pastor should be acquainted with the existence of philosophic and scientific difficulties, though he cannot acquire the knowledge required for dealing with them.

Some of these general difficulties and problems stated.

What ought to be the pastor's attitude towards them.

We may rightly abstain from speculative questions.

The need of a sound and strong basis of theology, supplemented by some knowledge of science.

Special points in which scientific knowledge directly influences our teaching. The transformation of transactions into processes, *e.g.* the Creation, the Fall.

A few words on miracles.

What science has done to strengthen faith.

### III

#### THE PASTOR'S ATTITUDE TO PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE<sup>1</sup>

IF lectures on pastoral theology are intended to assist in the preparation and equipment of the young pastor in his work, at least one lecture should be devoted to advice as to the spirit and intellectual temper in which we pastors ought to face those speculative difficulties which are associated with science and philosophy.

We are not all called on to deal directly with apologetics; but all of us ought to know something of the great obstacles to faith, and of the way in which those obstacles may be, in part, at any rate, overcome. They are not

<sup>1</sup> These lectures were in print before I had the advantage of reading the valuable article, "The Present Attitude of Reflective Thought towards Religion," by Prof. Henry Jones, in the *Hibbert Journal* for January 1903, and the *Life and Letters of Dr. Martineau*.

matters for the amateur to deal with offhand. A very slight acquaintance with the subject shows that the success of all opposition to Christian faith depends in no small degree on the literary and philosophical ability with which difficulties are presented; and the success is often increased by the weakness of unskilled defence. Most of us had better leave the defence in the hands of men who combine philosophical training with faith, such as the late Aubrey Moore, Illingworth, Inge, the Bishops of Manchester and Worcester, Hastings Rashdall, and the late J. Caird, and others.

Beyond this general advice I cannot go. These are not lectures on philosophy in general or on the philosophy of religion. You must look for these elsewhere. I will only say here that no one can profess to be a scientific theologian without a good knowledge of philosophy. Useful pastoral work is done without a knowledge of philosophy; but such a pastor must not venture far into the field of scientific theology.

But I will very briefly indicate what I mean by speculative difficulties associated with science

and philosophy. And I would add that I do this solely in the hope of showing that a strong, masculine, and reasonable faith is perfectly compatible with the frank recognition of these unsolved difficulties, and in the hope of giving you courage to take your own pastoral line. Difficulties in some form have beset every age, and our difficulties are after all the heritage and the characteristic problem of our time. But they will not in their present form last for ever, and they must therefore be regarded as a part of the Divine purpose unfolding itself in the evolution of the race.

Most of us, I hope, have had some training in physical science; or, if not, we have at least lived in an intellectual atmosphere of which scientific principles and methods form a part. If this atmosphere has really affected us, we find it, on the one hand, impossible to limit to the material world the application of these convincing principles and effective methods; and, on the other hand, if we impose no such limitation, and if we are at all logical, we seem to convert mind and soul into purely physical phenomena, dominated by law and mechanism,

and to refine away the distinctions between men and animals, between animals and vegetables, and between vegetables and minerals, and thus obliterate personality. This is, in general terms, one of the characteristic difficulties of to-day. We can draw no line between the material and the spiritual, and we can make no harmony between them. We can neither divide nor unite. There appear to be insuperable difficulties in thinking of nature as sharing in life, or of ourselves as isolated and discontinuous spots of life in a non-sentient universe. Perhaps we have to learn how important differences are, even if we only think them to be differences in degree.

We are, again, led by scientific methods and tests to limit real knowledge to the results of our experience of the finite; but we are none the less unable to give up our convictions as to the infinite as a necessity of thought. Here again no unity, no synthesis, seems as yet possible.

We live in another respect also, as it were, between two worlds, one dead, the other "waiting to be born." What are the criteria of



theological truth? the principles of theological criticism? We can neither justify a creed nor dispense with it. The age of instinctive, unquestioning faith, a faith wholly independent of philosophy, has passed away from some of us, and we seem to be endeavouring to restore it, or replace it, by philosophy. But philosophy has never yet replaced religion; and to endeavour by philosophy to revivify faith is like trying to galvanise a dead body to life.

Religion seems made up of unreconciled antinomies, of points of view which suggest theories that we cannot reconcile. The problem of heredity and circumstance and self-determination is ever with us; that of necessity and free will is never far off. From one point of view, religion wholly consists in identifying our wills with God's will by living in mystic union with Him; from another, it wholly consists in rightly discharging our temporary relations with one another.

More particularly at the present time we are called on to face the most delicate of all operations—the separation of the essential from the non-essential but traditional elements of

the Christian faith. There can be no development, no growth of an organism, except by the passing away of something. Our age is one of growth. Ought we not to regard this as a privilege rather than as a misfortune? But what is to pass away? What is permanent, or relatively permanent? What is transitory, and "ready to vanish away"? To take one illustration—what is the final importance to faith of events recorded in time? Are historical events to be for all men and for ever the foundation of ethics and of faith? Does the sanction of the Decalogue, for example, as a rule of ethics depend now on the historical narrative in which it is framed? Or has the Decalogue at length acquired another sanction in the ethical nature of man, which it has so greatly contributed to awaken, and to which it is a permanent witness?

We see and teach now that it is wrong to steal, not because stealing is forbidden by the Eighth Commandment, but because the Eighth Commandment, viewed in the light of experience, has helped to disclose the moral fact that it is wrong to steal. We see and

“know of our own selves.” Is it possible that the Christianity of a future age will be similarly based on something in addition to its historical basis,—on a spiritual consciousness, on an aggregate experience of a sonship to God, which, through the historic Christ of the Gospels, shall have become part of the inheritance, and one of the axioms, of the world? Of the two testimonies, “the Spirit itself” and “our spirit,” that together bear witness that “we are the children of God,” is the *onus probandi* being slowly shifted to the latter? And if this is possible, are we already witnessing, in some of the spiritual movements of our time, the throes that precede the birth of that age? Now, all this is the subject matter of philosophy; and therefore the Church cannot dispense with philosophy. The gravest and most practical problems, moreover, of our time are the philosophical problems arising out of evolution, heredity, determinism. It is to philosophy we are to look for guidance in education, in legislation, and in administration of justice; in all the questions of socialism, and property, and public duty.

These are outlines of some of the speculative difficulties round which the thoughts of religious men are now revolving ; and nothing is more necessary to the well-being of the Church than that some among its pastors should be masters of philosophy.

If, however, it were the duty of every pastor to attempt to deal publicly from the pulpit with these and similar questions, then few indeed would be qualified for Holy Orders. It is emphatically the duty of all who have the requisite ability. But it is not *our* duty unless we happen to have quite exceptional gifts. It is, however, our duty thoroughly to realise that these questions exist, and that there is nothing unfaithful or irreligious in entertaining them. It is part of our duty to sympathise with and respect those for whom these questions are intensely real, and to acknowledge that we cannot at present and alone resolve these questions : and lastly, it is our duty to make it clear to ourselves how, without intellectual dishonesty, we can leave these questions aside as not in our individual sphere, and do our own work modestly but whole-heartedly, as

true pastors of our flock. We must not limit the ministry either to philosophers, or to those who see no unsolved problems of faith, and have no philosophic doubt.

You must, in the first place, convince yourself of the inestimable value of all knowledge, and vow never to join in, or even to tolerate, the attempts of the ignorant, the timid, or the intolerant to disparage it. This must be your immovable attitude, even when knowledge, as it grows, seems to alter all the proportions of your existing faith. How wrongly, as we stand on the path at the bottom of some Alpine valley, do we judge the distances and heights and groupings of the peaks far in front of us! How incessantly and surprisingly do we modify our first judgment after reaching fresh points of view! There is an analogous error, and an analogous correction of error, in the world's judging of spiritual things. We, of all men, must be priests of truth: for God is truth, and every truth won by man brings man nearer to God. Truth is that ethereal region in which the human holds intellectual communion with the divine. It is easy, perhaps, to say this,

but history shows how hard it is for religious men to hold this truth fast. Convictions ought to be strongly held, but held with a mind open to fresh intellectual light. How knowledge has poured in on the world! God, who has taught us so much, has surely more in store for us, and we cannot in the least foresee of what sort it will be. We all acknowledge the progressiveness of revelation in the past; we, of all men, must open our minds to the revelation of the present, and "harden not our hearts." The God whom we serve is a living and ever-present God. Man is not yet what he shall become. We have faith that he will at last cross that

Gulf dimly divined  
Between the living world we see  
And the world as it ought to be.

And the next thought I wish to impress on you has been well put thus: "I have been led to conclude that perhaps the religious systems of all countries are now more or less an attempt to uphold the unfathomable and unconscious instinctive wisdom of millions of past generations against the comparatively

shallow, consciously reasoning, and ephemeral conclusions drawn from that of the last thirty or forty." This is a striking way of emphasising the truth that, whether our existing philosophical systems can embrace it or not, faith in God, and in a spiritual kingdom of which we form part, is a necessary and ineffaceable part of human nature. We need not be in the least perplexed if some system-makers tell us with reference to God that "they have no need of that hypothesis." *Securus judicat orbis*. Our pastoral work lies not with men engrossed in any scientific or philosophic system, with minds preoccupied, but with people who have for the most part wholesome and natural religious instincts; and I think the author I have just quoted says somewhere that "reason uncorrected by instinct is at least as dangerous as instinct uncorrected by reason."

It will be noticed that I have said nothing here of the pastor's attitude to historical studies. It is because this needs nothing less than a whole lecture to itself.

There is surely nothing more important to

us than to know what Christianity really is; and we can only learn what it really is by ascertaining from the veracious and scientific study of history what it has been. That veracious and scientific study of history has begun, and from it, as from the studies of philosophy and science, and perhaps even in still larger measure, light will pour in upon theology. The past has been for the most part held up to us not as the material from which reason may extract some guidance as to the evolution of the human race and human mind, but to illustrate and recommend some theory. The true study will doubtless raise many questions, as well as solve many. The theology that may result from it will not be exactly the theology of to-day, but it will rest on so broad and assured a basis that the generations to come will not tremble at the name of historical criticism.

It is by such reflections as these that most of us have to justify our abstention from speculative questions, even while we recognise their existence. Our pastoral work, in the immense majority of cases, lies with those who are



incapable of entering into the region in which scientific difficulties arise. They cannot analyse their religious belief. They hold the spiritual truths of the Gospel by the grasp of healthy instinct and right action. Experience is to them sufficient verification of those truths. We are not all of us called to the study of apologetics for dogma; and there is a large region of opinion outside that of positive dogma, in which truth will only result from discussion. But we may not be called on to take part in that discussion.

We cannot make it too clear to ourselves that the real bond of communion in the Spirit of Christ, into which we desire to enter along with all our people—and no one will deny that this is the highest aim we can put before ourselves—is not at all the bond of a common philosophy, or of a common education, but that of a common spirit and aim—a humility, a simplicity, a Christ-like temper, a life like that which we may suppose Christ's to have been before His public ministry, which we may share with the humblest. Intellectual pursuits, if allowed to absorb the thought of a pastor, and

unbalanced by the completest sympathy with the common life of all men, separate him from his people. It is the bond of a common earthly and of a common spiritual life which unites, and there lies the sphere of the pastor. That bond is completely symbolised in the Holy Communion, in which is set forth the equal capacity of all for participation in the divine life, and for fellowship with each other. Never for an instant let us admit that the sphere of our work is of an inferior order, because it cannot be treated on purely intellectual grounds. It cannot be depreciated and disparaged by such phrases as that clergy are dealing not with truths but with sentiments, not with facts but with fancies—that we are content with illusions. We must and we can claim that there are whole regions, and those the very finest, of human nature which lie outside intellectual definition and intellectual conviction, and yet, as has been said, “they give to conviction much of its practical vitality and momentum.” “Great thoughts come from the heart.” There is a standard of value other than the intellectual; and we refuse to

submit our work to an intellectual standard of value alone.

And if we are taunted with accepting illusions, let us reply that there are illusions and illusions: that we will uphold no illusions bred of an unveracious optimism that desires to conceal unpleasant facts; but that the religious view of the world, bringing out its beauty and its sublimity, even though we "see in a glass darkly," is no such illusion. The world is something great and glorious, and anything which helps us to appreciate its greatness and its glory is not of the nature of an illusion, but is an interpreter of fact. Religion is the highest poetry of life: it admits to the region of reality.

I am no philosopher, but I imagine that a philosophical reply might also be made to this charge that we deal with illusions. The charge is usually made from the side of physical science. But there are differences as well as resemblances between the methods of establishing truth in physical science and in religion. All knowledge implies the subject and the object, we are told; but the externality of the object

varies from the complete externality in the material sciences to the very attenuated externality in the personal experience of our inner life. Knowledge in the latter case cannot have the same external tests, and the same external verifications, as in the former ; but it is not therefore an illusion, though it may be deemed so in the judgment of one who from a limited range of thought takes physical science as the sole standard of knowledge. I believe that the universal application of this standard is already becoming a thing of the past, and will ere long be as much a curiosity of philosophy as scholasticism.

But though the sphere of pastoral work with our people lies apart from these philosophical problems, for our own sakes we need more than a popular theology as a foundation for our convictions. We need, if you will, an esoteric, as well as an exoteric, theology. The two will of course be identical in every respect but that of expression. But the expressions may differ very widely. Just as a doctor has his scientific diagnosis, which involves conceptions utterly unknown to the patient, or as a physicist has

conceptions of physical action which he transforms in the attempt to popularise them, so the pastor ought to have behind the popular theology which determines his expression, a deeper set of theological principles which co-ordinate and consolidate his own thoughts. The doctor will talk of infection and fever; but he is thinking of bacilli, and phagocytes, and I know not what. The theoretic electrician will talk of currents and induction; but his mind dwells on the unexpressed mystery of the ether. There must be something closely analogous to this in the mind of a good pastor. He will speak of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; of the soul, and the final judgment, and the eternal life in Heaven; but he will know that not to him or to any man is known, except by imperfect analogies, the ultimate reality of the subjects of which he speaks. He will remember, though his people do not know, that by the nature of the case our words express limitations arising out of our own limitations. "Without a parable spake He not unto them," must be as true of the servant as it was of the Master. Not the loftiest thoughts that man

can attain to can be adequate to express God. And this knowledge will make the pastor humble, sincere, reverent; and the humility of his knowledge will knit to him the simple hearts of his people. He will always speak as in the temple of the Unseen God, and he will avoid the familiarity with which the unthoughtful preacher too often speaks of God, to the offence of some, and to the vulgarisation of others, of his hearers.

There are further reasons why every pastor should acquire such knowledge as he can of scientific and philosophic reasoning.

We cannot fail to note that among men, along with a growth of confidence in Christian ethics as the necessity for national life; there is a lessening interest in theology and Christian evidences. Among the uneducated class, there is a growth of spiritualism and its impostures; and among the educated classes, there is marked alienation from Christian thought, and in some cases the growth in its place of fantastic beliefs, — strangely concocted pseudo-science and credulity. We cannot help asking why this should be. Most of

these men and women have been under Church teaching. Why has it gained so little hold upon them? It would be unwise to attribute so general a result to any one cause. But among the causes must be placed the very imperfect religious education which from our pulpits, and in our schools, we offer to our people. Reflect that in every other subject, in all places of higher education, teachers stimulate to the utmost the critical, and literary, and scientific spirit: they encourage activity, originality, and independence of thought. An education which does not stimulate the desire to investigate ultimate principles is rightly thought defective. And by these methods of teaching a strong sense of reality in all other branches of knowledge is given to our scholars. They see that it is based on experience.

But in teaching religion our methods are too often quite different. You may remember, if you have read Ibsen's *Brand*, the description of religious teaching given by the Dean :—

It's all so easy : Faith, you see,  
Broad-based upon authority ;

Which being upon learning stayed,  
May be implicitly obeyed :  
While rule and ritual leave no doubt  
How faith ought to be acted out.

It is so precise and sympathetic a description of a method which we recognise as common that one might almost fail to notice that it is satiric.

This is one reason why the study of some one at least of the natural sciences is so desirable for clergy. It is not the additional knowledge that such a study gives, but a certain almost indefinable change of attitude. The old mediæval ideal of a university, which still haunts us, and in particular haunts the theological schools and colleges, is that of simply conserving and transmitting knowledge and opinion. It unconsciously assumes that truth is already ascertained, that everything is known, and that we have only to acquire it, and hand it down. Our faces are towards the past. But the study of science turns our faces to the future, to what is not yet known. Its attitude is always one of investigation, not of authority. It is always looking forward. Now there is an unconscious antag-



onism between these two types of mind. We preach in vain to men who have learnt that patient and modest investigation alone will win truth, if we are not so far in sympathy with them in their own subjects as to understand their attitude. Our teaching even of religion should have an experimental note in it. It should rest on verified facts, and look for still further light to be cast on the faith.

We must lay much of the blame on our own shoulders for the alienation of people from theology ; we must recognise that something is wanting in the education they get from us. And this is a very real reason for our endeavouring to study, a little more profoundly than used to be necessary, the difficulties of religious faith.

But it is time to turn from these generalities on the influence of scientific thought on faith to some particular points in which scientific knowledge must directly affect our own popular teaching. Its effect may perhaps be described by saying that it has in many instances transformed a transaction into a process.

The dramatic conception of God fashioning

the world and all that is in it in six days, and resting the seventh day, appeals to the poetry and the imagination, and it stimulates the religious awe of man in presence of the supernatural. In the absence of any suspicion of proof to the contrary, it was quite justifiable to ask, Why should it not be a fact? It was a very ancient belief; it had been purified by Israel of much of its grotesqueness; it lent itself readily to moral uses; it was indeed a splendid parable; it had some apparent relation to the common facts of observation; and it had become part of our orthodox belief.

But this dramatic conception is gone—vanished from the educated world. It has gone, and yet it has left no vacuum behind. We have learnt within a few generations that this earth is not the centre of the universe; that the six days' drama is poetry, not science—the dramatic representation of a process as a transaction; and we now know that we have no other means than scientific investigation for finding out how this earth has come to be what it is. But we are sure that it was a process, continuous in the main; we know that it is

very imperfectly understood; and that there is no proof that there were not discontinuities, as there is no proof that there were. The main point is that Creation, which used to be taught as a transaction, is now seen to be a process.

You may fairly ask, when, to whom, and where, am I to interpret Creation as a process, and how connect this teaching with the drama of Genesis? I have still in my ears the indignant words of an old secularist, spoken at a public meeting convened to discuss difficulties in the Bible: "How long have you gentlemen in black known this and concealed it from us?" I think we little know how much conflict of faith and reason, and how much distrust of the clergy, so obvious and so painful in recent controversies, is due to concealment of such truth. My own belief is that in every pulpit, whenever the subject is touched on, we should make it clear that the early chapters of Genesis are but the pious cosmogonies and speculations of the ancient world, which we prosaic Westerns have too literally interpreted as an inspired revelation of scientific fact. No boy or girl above our infant schools should be left in ignorance of our

knowledge. Nothing should be taught which must soon be unlearned. Every fossil in the school museum cries out against literal teaching. But still the old argument is heard in the workshops: "The churches teach lies—they teach that the world was made in six days."

Has the Fall quite ceased to be regarded as a transaction, and become a process? It is presented to us as a dramatic transaction. There is the serpent, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the woman, the man. How are we to teach it? We are doubtless individually convinced that it is not a miraculous event in actual history. It never took place in the way in which it is recorded. The hold the story has on us lies in its truth to human nature, and in its wonderful imagination. We see it before our eyes. Such was the parable under which some inspired teacher of old imaged to himself the inexplicable fact of the incompatibility of sin with human nature as we know it ought to be. We know in our hearts that the Fall is a process repeated in every one of us and in the race. A man falls not once, by one insane act of folly, but by countless acts, and loses his

Paradise, and then the flaming sword turns him back on every side. I cannot put the positive teaching better than it has been put by the late Professor Hort. After saying that it is no longer reasonable to assume the account of the Fall to be strictly historical, he goes on: "But the early chapters of Genesis remain a divinely appointed parable or apologue, setting forth important truths on subjects which, as matter of history, lie outside our present ken. Whether or not the corrupted state of human nature was preceded in temporal sequence by an incorrupt state, this is the most vivid and natural way of exhibiting the truth that in God's primary purpose man was incorrupt, so that the evil in him should be regarded as having a secondary or adventitious character. Ideal antecedence is, as it were, pictured in temporal antecedence." It will be a great step gained in religious teaching when every day-school teacher, as well as every clergyman, may teach the story of the Fall with perfect honesty, because he may also, whenever he thinks fit, teach that it is a parable.

In these narratives, then, and probably in

others, as in the story of Sinai, we are witnessing in our day the transmutation, under scientific influence, of narratives of transaction into parables of process. To this transmutation our minds should be fully open. It is going faster and farther with others than with ourselves. And the transmutation does not seem to be even a temporary loss; it is an immediate gain. But we must remember that unlearning is a dangerous process, unless it is accompanied with learning. The former is not in our control. But to ensure the latter, the perception of the spiritual and eternal truth, is our duty. The fact of the intrusion of sin against our better nature; the need of struggle against sin with every aid that discipline and meditation can give us; the experience that sin bars happiness; that we are in God's image, though sinful, and find in Christ the renewal in ourselves of that image—these are the truths men need not unlearn. And these are the truths for the pastoral theologian.

These lectures are not the place for any full discussion on miracles, and on our pastoral duties in speaking of them. But the subject is

so closely connected with science and philosophy that it cannot be wholly left out.

The present position is this. There is absolutely convincing evidence that some events, which we should commonly call miraculous, as related in the Gospels, did actually happen. I have given elsewhere<sup>1</sup> a full treatment of this evidence. A chief point in it is that in the undisputed letters of St. Paul to the Corinthian Church, of which we know the circumstances so well, he speaks of miracles in the most simple and natural way, as having been wrought by himself among them quite recently. It is evidence one would accept in letters of Cicero or of Pliny. I cannot doubt that St. Paul's power of mind and will over the minds and wills and bodies of others was so abnormal as to deserve the name miraculous. But then comes the *a fortiori*. What was St. Paul compared to our Lord? The Gospel narratives are less attested historical documents than some of St. Paul's Epistles; but if miracles were absent from the Gospels, how should we have accounted for their absence? That the

<sup>1</sup> *Essays and Addresses*. Macmillan and Co.

“slave” of the Lord Jesus should have had these powers, and his Master should have had them not, would be incredible.

But in the next place, it is not necessary to deny that an element of legend has mixed with the narratives of the New Testament as well as with those of the Old Testament. Legend, however, is not quite the right word. The story of a miracle was as natural and obvious a way of teaching as was the parable. It was teaching by picture; and the attitude of mind towards such teaching was not among the original hearers, and should not be among us, either precisely to accept as fact or to deny as fiction. The thought about such teaching lay in a region equally remote from fact and fiction, and disposed them to open the mind quite uncritically, like that of a child, to the spiritual influence and lesson of the story.

Further, it is perfectly impossible, on any grounds, critical or other, to say that our faith as Christians demands that one narrative shall be taken literally and objectively, but that we may think as we please about another. This is, I know, a common solution; but it is only a



temporary one. I believe the subject to be, like many others which are much discussed, one which can never be settled, and one on which a settlement, even if it could be arrived at, would be of little importance. Not thus does Christ now draw the world to Himself.

Hence I think the true conclusion for us is that we ought with full intellectual conviction to express our belief that our Divine Lord possessed and showed powers far beyond our normal human nature, and thus showed His divine Origin and Being; and that while this demonstration is part of the purpose of those powers, there is always associated with their exercise a spiritual teaching, a revelation of an inner truth of things, which it should be our main duty to interpret. To insist on materialistic details has become a hindrance, not an aid, to faith, and diverts us from the main purpose of those powers.

Our thoughts in connection with miracles turn of course to the miraculous birth and the physical resurrection of our Lord. On these great subjects I do not think that the final

word can be said by our age. But in our thought of the Incarnation there should be one element always present to separate it *toto cælo* from every anticipation of it in other religions. Other imagined incarnations have been poetic dreams of men lifted above the normal conditions of human life. The Greek gods were but men and women lifted up into the ether of the divine and then worshipped. But the Christ whom we worship lived under all the conditions of human life, on this hard earth's surface, in a small and despised nation, as infant and boy and toiler for daily bread, and as suffering all our sorrows. The Incarnation shows the ideal to lie not in a region of fancy, but in our common life, in our parishes, among working folk, in the commonplace. This is no poetic fancy; it is the eternal revelation of the divineness and the dignity of all human life. This is the secret of the power of the Gospel on human hearts and human minds. It has uplifted the whole of human nature from the bottom.

So our faith is that the union of the human

and the divine, towards the knowledge of which the world is tending, was made manifest in Christ. That union of the human and divine, that atonement of man and God, demands from us an identification of our will with God's will, and therefore demands from us all the discipline, the study, the willing service that shall assist in this identification. This is the goal of our pastoral work. Here is the synthesis, and the simplicity we need; and it is as far removed from self-deification as it is from Deism. It is on this goal, however far off it may seem, that we pastors must fix our eyes. The extraordinary extension of human knowledge, and of human activities, may make our work in this age more difficult, and make it also appear to be less pressing, because the limited capacity of men's minds is so filled with sectional and material interests that there seems no room for the larger and the divine. But we may be sure that though men limit themselves to the finite, man cannot do so. He is impelled by a nameless force in quest of unity and truth and God. We may admit that the problem and the mystery of things is for the present beyond us;

but never let us admit that it is beyond the ultimate attainment of man, when he shall have attained to the stature of the fulness of Christ ; and let us keep the path open ; and verily for this, Christ is the Way.

LECTURE IV.

## ABSTRACT

THE ethics of religious conformity.

Pastors are pledged to follow the lines of the Church of England in their pastoral and priestly office ; yet some liberty permitted.

This lecture is on the attitude of the pastor towards the Bible.

The Bible the foundation of the science of theology ; its uniqueness led to the belief in its inerrancy.

The meaning of inspiration if the Bible is not inerrant.

The ultimate foundation on which faith rests if the Bible is not inerrant.

The interpretation and formulation of human experience, past and present ; its relation to historical evidence for the origin of Christianity.

The attitude of the pastor to the higher criticism. It must be fearless. The natural dislike of suspension of judgment even on minor points must be overcome.

The transference of authority going on at the present time.

The pastor's use of the Bible in teaching.

## IV

### THE ATTITUDE OF THE PASTOR TOWARDS THE BIBLE

IN the two preceding lectures we have been thinking about the pastor's attitude towards national life and progress, and towards the scientific and philosophic methods and spirit. Now suppose some one says, "These questions are determined for you by two authorities, the Bible and the Church. You are not in a position, as an ordained pastor and priest of the Church, to act and think freely on these subjects. Your duty is prescribed for you once for all: you have surrendered your freedom; you have to ascertain what these authorities say, and their mind and their system must be henceforward yours." What are we to say? Is a pastor bound to act and think in fetters? So we come to the subject

of this lecture, the attitude of the pastor to the Bible, and to the subject of the next lecture, the attitude of the pastor to the Church. A few general remarks must precede. .

There is no doubt that the popular conception of the pastor is that he is one who in taking Holy Orders sells his intellectual birth-right and franchise, and becomes, once for all, the agent and minister of a book and a system. That is the feeling of many educated laymen towards us.

And there is no doubt that there are very many within our Church who regard with suspicion the Churchmanship, and even the Christianity, of any one who questions anything which they themselves accept unquestioningly; and that there are many outside our Church who resent as a dishonest evasion any demurrer as to the reality of the narrow restrictions they imagine to exist on the thought of the clergy. The nature and extent of these restrictions are therefore matters which need consideration. They influence, and often deter, men who contemplate Holy Orders. One who has been ordained with no clear thought about them



must sooner or later consider them. The Ethics of Religious Conformity are a serious branch of Ethics.

Now in the Office for the ordination of Priests there are put before us, in true proportion and subordination, firstly, the aim of the pastoral and priestly office in the Church; and, secondly, the methods by which we pledge ourselves to try to attain that aim. "The office and charge to which we are called is to be Messengers, Watchmen, and Stewards of the Lord; to teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever." This work of bringing our people to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ is, you will observe, put in the forefront; to bring them to Christ, to shepherd them for Christ, is the supreme and reiterated aim. The ethics of our conduct must be judged by reference to this aim.

Then follows a description of the methods that we propose to use. We will "minister

the doctrine and sacraments and discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Church and Realm hath received the same"; and we pledge ourselves to be "diligent in reading the Holy Scriptures, and in instructing out of them the people committed to our charge."

There can be no doubt that in these words we pledge ourselves in general to follow the methods of the Church of England and of the Bible in doing the work of our pastoral and priestly office. We are not entirely free and unfettered evangelists. We will use the Church's doctrine, sacraments, and discipline. We will teach out of the Bible. It is in determining what degree of freedom is permissible in adapting our methods, as pastors, to the supreme aim of bringing men to Christ; in discriminating between what is essential and what is variable in loyally following our Church; between what is the permanent teaching, and what the passing interpretation of the Bible, that differences of temperament and knowledge and judgment come in, and make the question one which has no definite and final solution

for us all. History shows that interpretations change and pass away. There is *some* limit to our allegiance to the letter of Church rules and of Bible texts, though the limit is not clear. We may well believe that men who truly love and honour our Master with humility and a single eye to His service, even if they differ widely on this point, will not go far wrong.

The right attitude, moreover, for one man and one age is not necessarily the same as that for another man and another age. We have no ground for thinking that the divine ideal for man is uniformity. Life means variety, and life is what we need. I think, therefore, we must conclude that, though the pledge we take is real, there is nothing in it which tends to reduce us to the level of mechanical agents of a routine. There is freedom under the pledge. There is nothing to justify men in saying, as a man once said, "I carry out to the letter the Church's system, and if it fails the responsibility is not mine." I need not tell you that in his case it did fail, and I need scarcely suggest that the only part of the Church's system which he carried out was the mechanical

part of it. I hope you will understand that the last thing that the Church desires from you is a servile adherence to anything that can be called a method. We need some men whose fiery loyalty to the Master oversteps the conventionalities of His service, whose love of souls finds new modes of expression. The Holy Spirit is not bound to one method. New conditions demand new methods of warfare.

But I must come closer to particulars ; and as a matter of convenience I take first, as the subject for this lecture, the attitude of the pastor towards the Bible, leaving for the next lecture the attitude of the pastor towards the Church. Indeed, the Bible is the foundation of the whole science of theology in a sense which has no parallel in any other science. It is not Christianity only, it is the whole conception of religion as the outcome of a revelation made by God in the hearts of men, that is involved in our thought of the Bible. The whole Bible from beginning to end assumes and contains this progressive revelation. The thorough acceptance and understanding of this point is therefore of the first importance to a pastor.

It is, of course, the plain and familiar historical fact that the Christian Church was in full life and in partial organisation before there was a New Testament. The New Testament is the product, not the charter, of the Church. But the Bible expresses the vitality of the Church, contains its fundamental beliefs, and will ever remain the source of our knowledge of the soil from which it sprang, and of the supreme Personality of our Lord, and of the spirit and thoughts that animated His first followers.

But, indeed, it is not a mere question of priority in time between Bible and Church; for it is historically true that it is from the study of the Scriptures that, in every successive age, a new awakening of the divine Life in men has arisen, recalling those awakenings which gave these Scriptures birth. Their revelation is perpetually renewed. The Bible is verily the Word of God in the hands and on the lips of the pastor. No words are too strong to express the difference in degree, as verified by human experience, between the enlightening and searching power of the books of the Bible and that of all other works. This is why they

are of such undying value. The fact finds its verification in far too many hearts to be dismissed as a passing instance of human illusions. There is a mystery in it beyond the reach of rationalism.

The books of the Bible do not all stand on the same level. We may approach them naturally, and read them like other books. But no one with an eye for facts can deny the uniqueness of their power in the aggregate over the minds and hearts of men. Wherein this power consists is as difficult to define as to say wherein consists life in an organism, or genius in a man. We know that power by its effects, as we know life and genius by their effects. The power of the Bible is unique as an inspiration to holiness and righteousness; unique in its evoking in men's hearts the consciousness of the divine, the call to the higher life of the Spirit within, the temper and character of the Christian.

But this uniqueness became, as we all know, stereotyped into the mechanical theory of an inspiration that made the book infallible in matters of fact as well as in those of prin-

ple. The Bible thus became the final authority on every subject it touched. I perfectly remember, for example, when Darwin's *Descent of Man* came out, that the question was asked with bewilderment in clerical circles, "How can a book be written on this subject? We *know* how man was created." I do not doubt for a moment that this intellectual form, which reverence for the Bible and the feeling of its power assumed, was a necessary stage in the evolution of religious thought; it was like the hard husk that protects the tender life of the seed. These beliefs do not arise by accident. The Church of England, indeed, meaning thereby for a moment its authoritative documents, has never, as we all know, made this infallible accuracy of the Bible, in either fact or doctrine, an article of faith. But this was the chief and unquestioned article of popular religious faith up to a generation or two ago; and it is the survival of this popular religious faith with which we pastors have sympathetically, tenderly, but truly and progressively, to deal. There lies the real difficulty—to help the error to unfold itself into truth. And for this,

modesty, piety, sound critical knowledge, a sense of the proportion of things, aptness to teach, and above all a true pastoral spirit, are our safeguard.

Two questions arise: the first touches the nature of Biblical inspiration. I said that our Church of England has never made the infallible accuracy of the Bible in either fact or doctrine an article of faith. This is, of course, not true of the Church of Rome. Pope Leo XIII., in his recent encyclical on the study of Scripture, formally declares that "those who maintain that an error is possible in any genuine passage of the sacred writings, pervert the Catholic notion of inspiration, and make God the author of such error."

This perhaps fairly expresses the popular belief among the less instructed of our own people. And it is worth our seeing into what evasions any one will be led who attempts verbally to retain this belief, and yet to face the facts of Scripture.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Clerical Studies*, by the Very Rev. J. B. Hogan, S.S., D.D., published with the *imprimatur* of the Archbishop of Boston, U.S.A. chapter xii. Art. (4).



He may be led, as some of us are led, to say that all matters of fact, historical or scientific, were left to the writers' human faculties, and are therefore liable to human error; but that in all spiritual matters the writers were infallible. This, however, is incapable of proof, and satisfies no one. Or he may be led to an evasion of the truth, by reading into the words some meaning wholly foreign to the mind of the writer, whenever he appears to contradict historic or scientific fact.

Let us avoid all such finesse and evasion. The true foundation of our interpretation must be to teach that the oriental habits of expression and thought of the writers are not affected by their becoming channels of divine teaching, and must be studied; that the scientific lines of demarcation between fact and allegory and poetry were not defined to them in literature as they are to us; and that even the closest union of the soul with God, the most inspired and saintly life, is no protection from errors of fact. The main contest with popular infidelity will turn on the Bible; and woe to us if we deal with it dishonestly. The birth of the historical spirit and method

like that of the physical sciences, has had, and will have, a profound influence on the spirit of Biblical study. Let us be sure that edification rests on truth; that the better we understand the Bible the more it will be to us. This principle is of the greatest importance in determining the character of the religious education to be given in schools.

And it is by no means only in matters of history and fact that we are bound in loyalty to truth to admit errors in the Bible. It is of even greater immediate importance that we should teach that the early ideas of morality and of God were defective. "We can no longer say," says Aubrey Moore, "'It is in the Bible, approved or allowed by God; therefore it is right.'" We must never allow ourselves to forget that we are studying imperfect records of a progressive revelation, and can never spare ourselves the effort of a moral judgment.

But I must pass from this, which is now a fairly familiar subject,<sup>1</sup> to a question far harder, which is pressing even now.

The harder question is one which we

<sup>1</sup> See *Why Men do not believe the Bible*. Two lectures. S.P.C.K.

scarcely dare ask ourselves: "On what ultimate foundation is our faith to rest, the inerrancy of the Bible having disappeared?" It is time for us to face this question. Is there any answer, or only an uncertain one, made up of qualified, hesitating, and contradictory statements? It is for want of this answer that many men dare not take Holy Orders.

Rome has an easy answer: "The Church is infallible." And there are temperaments impatient of suspense, who resolve to accept this; and there are people whom this answer in its crudest form will satisfy. But it is not the answer of the ancient and Catholic Church; and it is not true.

The answer which in our hearts we know to be true is that, in God's scheme for the education of man, there is no infallible authority anywhere. The divine message on every subject comes to the world of men through fallible channels; we can never spare ourselves the pain and responsibility of judging. Nothing is infallible. A living man may, as we see, have the Spirit of God in him, and evoke that Spirit in others, and yet be neither

sinless nor infallible. So books may be, and are, the vehicles of a divine message, and yet be very fallible.

It is to the totality, the consensus, or ethical judgments, to the collective spiritual insight of the best men, that we must look. And though the religious temperaments and sensibilities and capacities of men differ so widely, it is no discordant, uncertain result in which this consensus finds expression. There exists a voice of the universal divine, latent or germinant in the heart of every one—a voice of every age; and that this voice should ever grow clearer, more commanding, seems to be the purpose of the moral evolution, the spiritual teleology, of man. The inner and universal experiences—those convictions that lie so deep in our human nature that words do not express them, and ratiocination cannot formulate them—are the ultimate foundations of our religion. Our theology partly consists in the interpretation and formulation of human experience. Is it too much to say that our belief in the Incarnation is ultimately based on experience as well as on history? Experience

is doing more and more every day to make credible facts both in the physical and spiritual world, which are lightly dismissed as fiction by those who have not studied the facts.

But do not human experiences vary, and will not our theology vary with them? Yes, just as continents rise and fall by secular changes; and yet it is not misleading to say that "the round earth standeth so fast that it cannot be moved." There is an immense continuity of human experience, like the submerged continents out of which islands rise; and this is the final authority of faith, the voice of God in the universal heart of man.

Now to say this is not to say that the historical evidence of the origin of Christianity has become valueless, or even secondary—still less to say that the teaching and preaching of Christ as the Saviour and the Divine Son of man is superfluous. "Do we make void" history "through faith?" Quite the reverse. "Nay, we establish" history. The evidence stands good, and is of primary importance. The study of the Bible known as higher

criticism is meant, we must remember, solely to ascertain the historical facts, and the circumstances attending the origin of the various books, so far as is now possible. There is another, and a quite different question, which is not a subject for literary criticism, but is a subject for the philosophical and religious interpretation of experience—how far, and in what way, these books, whatever their origin, contribute to the elucidation of our human life and destiny on earth, and to the evoking into consciousness the Life of God within us.

As regards the first point, the results of criticism, I shall be extremely brief. You and I are alike unable to follow the course of the long and very extensive campaigns in the wide veldt of literary criticism of the last half-century. No man, however wide his learning, still less any one who is engaged in pastoral work, knows the whole field which is being explored by experts and specialists. But you may safely take it as established that the books of the New Testament are authentic records of Christian faith and thought as they existed at a very early date. That is as far as

history and criticism can take us. The books demonstrate that such and such was the belief about Christ's life; such and such the thought about His person and revelation and teaching, and about the significance of His life and death; such and such the order and discipline and faith of the Society that sprang up to perpetuate His life on earth, in the years that immediately followed. The Gospels are not interpretative after-thoughts. And that is enough for us as pastors. For if history and criticism go so far as to demonstrate this, they make it certain also that there was a historic foundation for those faiths and opinions, and on this foundation, the historic Personality of Christ, we also may rest. That marvellous Personality is, or may be, better known to us than He was to any age between the first century and the twentieth. And it is He who is our Life, and the Author of our faith. That is the solid positive result of historic criticism.

We shall not be distressed by questions whether St. Matthew was the scribe or the source of the first Gospel, nor as to the relation of St. John to the fourth Gospel. No critical

question as to the objectivity of certain narratives should provoke us to take our stand here, or draw a line there, and declare, "Thus far and no farther shall the tide of criticism flow." It were madness to make a doubtful point of history or of literary judgment into a vital point of faith.

Let me give again an illustration given before. On what basis does the authority of the Decalogue now depend? Is it on the objective and literal truth of the narrative of Sinai? Is it on this in any degree? We are compelled to answer, No, it is not so now. Whatever the authority was once, whatever the interpretation was once, it is now based on the collective ethical judgments and experience of men. And the transference of this authority, at the hand of criticism, from one basis to another, has not weakened that authority; it has only disclosed its security and solidity.

We may have watched as children some workmen clearing out the soil close to the walls of our house, and feared that the house would tumble down; and behold, the house is not built on the soil at all, as we thought, but



on a rock, whose existence we never suspected, which was covered by the soil. "Which things are an allegory."

So the right attitude of the pastor on points of Biblical criticism, as it seems to me, is that of intelligent, interested, and open-minded observation. It is not only that except in a few points we do not know much yet of positive results, nor that there is an element of time in establishing any result. There is such an element of time ; for however confident one may be that something is proved or disproved, one must always allow for the possibility of fresh discovery, and for the illuminating thought of a new genius. But the important point is that we pastors must realise and teach that all questions of fact are to be dealt with by the calm discussion of evidence, not by authority. We may be sure that such discussion will show at last the real foundations of the faith we need. There is, I know, a hot-house faith that is cut down by the chill wind of criticism, but that faith scarcely seems akin to a divine ideal. Rather let our faith be robust enough to flourish in that biting air,

and in the rough world of facts, and to draw strength from them.

But even this does not quite bring out my conviction. It seems to me that any one who allows himself to fear what may be the consequence of knowledge of facts, is in a very real sense setting up an idol, a false god, and deliberately bowing down to it. Facts are the expression of God's will; our opinions and preconceptions are the image we make of God's will. Which shall we worship? Can we hesitate? We shall, of course, be careful in weighing evidence, because great issues hang on the result; but we will not weight the scales beforehand by invincible prejudice or fear.

I do earnestly press on you this attitude of mind. If at its centre our creed was a temporary sham and an imposture, which we pledged ourselves to defend as long as we could, then we should do well to evade and postpone criticism. As it is, we have more than any one else to gain from truth.

Some one will probably suggest that my advice is tantamount to saying that the only reasonable attitude is to treat everything as

an open question; that one cannot avoid agnosticism, but one must conceal the fact that one is an agnostic. Let us consider this, and begin by remarking that this is not a very accurate use of the word agnosticism.

There are some people so constituted that anything seems better than what Bacon calls the *adulta suspensio judicii*. Let their creed be extensive and definite, they say, no matter how shallow. It is this type of mind which classes as sceptics all who are not traditionalists; and, moreover, often calls them not sceptics but infidels. Such men are always in evidence. But this temper springs from impatience, and sometimes from unsettledness, or even insincerity, with a leaven also of irreverence. Is it not irreverence that is so ready to assume that all God's dealings can be apprehended by our small understandings, and that our generation can master all truth? And is it not impatience and insincerity to grasp at, and profess as satisfactory, a faith that does not satisfy the reason, and think such a profession a merit? This impatience of suspense is a grave temptation and danger to-day to the

clergy. If a man does not hold some things more strongly than others, he holds all feebly. Suspension of judgment on a great many points is not infidelity to God; it is humility, and fidelity to truth. See whether such a suspense affects conduct, and life, and spirit. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Let me say at once that I hope we all know our ignorance on some things, and are waiting for more light.

Think not thy wisdom can illumine away  
The ancient tanglement of night and day.  
Enough: we acknowledge both, and both revere;  
He sees not clearer who sees all things clear.<sup>1</sup>

But the attitude of mind I am putting before you with respect to criticism leads to a very different goal on all the great essential articles of our faith. It is historically certain, a fact confirmed by criticism, that those who came under the personal or very close influence of Jesus Christ, no less than we who to-day study His life and teaching, have been alike unable to think of Him as an ordinary man. We are compelled, as they were compelled, to think that in Christ God Himself appeared as one

<sup>1</sup> W. Watson,

with human nature, and manifested the possibilities of humanity as He has done in no one else. And as a result, we feel it, as they felt it, the only suitable, the only true way to speak of Him as the Son of God, and the Saviour; a man, and yet other than men; possessing and revealing a spiritual power in man far beyond the limit known to our personal experience—a power still seen to be as real as when He was on earth. All this is positive enough, dogmatic enough for use. There is no requirement laid on us to accept any speculative propositions about Him. We are to take Him into our hearts as the Life of our spirit, and to realise our mystical union with Him. “Our profession,” we are told, is “to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and be made like unto Him.” The Scriptures lead us to Christ, and then they have done their part. The men of Samaria, after they had been brought by the woman to Christ, said to her, “Now we believe, not because of thy word, for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.” Our faith, in like manner, rests on no secondhand

evidence ; it rests on experience, on an experience evoked by our knowledge of the historic Christ ; and this experience is an evidence ever renewed, ever growing in cogency.

I have spoken at considerable length, because this process of transference of authority from the text of the Bible to some other centre is one of present importance and of some obscurity. The impatient pastor will seize at some semblance of outward authority, and pin his faith to some party or society ; and when the illusion fails him, nothing remains but an unsettled despair or a blindfolded advocacy. Another type of pastor, patient and humble, accepts unquestioningly traditional views, but is too much occupied by work and spiritual experiences, perhaps too much engrossed by inward realities, to feel any need to revise his faith from an intellectual standpoint. One might well envy such a one, if it were not for the knowledge that his work as a pastor will be seriously limited by this curtailment of his intellectual sympathies. Such a one will be effective with those on precisely his own plane. But he will

scarcely have the strong grasp of truth that will make him a pastor to those who are not on his own plane of this generation, or to the leading spirits of the next.

It is the attitude of the pastor, the teacher, that I have been speaking of. In his personal and devotional use of the Bible he should feel more and more its unique power of bringing him into God's presence, of laying open, uncovering, his soul to the sunshine and fresh air of heaven. If he studies the New Testament with modern lights, Christ ought to become very real to him—so real that he is helped to see all spiritual experiences of himself and others as with the eyes of Christ. The Bible is in this sense also the source of pastoral inspiration, the source of unity and solidity in his faith.

A very few words must be said as to the pastor's use of the Bible in the pulpit. The use of the Bible in the Day and Sunday School is equally important, but on this I cannot now speak.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> May I refer here to a *Series of Notes for One Year's Sunday School Lessons*, which I have edited for the S.P.C.K.

There was an age of Christendom, not so many centuries ago, when few people could read, and there were no printed books. What was the preacher's work then? The subjects of preaching were probably limited to the Creed, and the narratives that bear on it, to the Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, the seven great virtues, and the seven deadly sins. That is, the priest gave oral instruction on the most important truths of ethics, of Gospel history, and of revelation, and directed and stimulated the devotion of a non-reading public. Preaching, in a word, was ethical and disciplinary. And the pastor spoke with authority, arising from the mysterious powers he was believed to possess. The selection of the most important truths lay with the priest. But with the Reformation and with printing arose an almost universal and eager study of the Bible, and the conviction that it was to be interpreted by each man for himself. Teachers and taught, clergy and laity, studied the Bible with intense eagerness; a new Protestant eclecticism, and a new Protestant system of theology, were the result.



The traditions of that age are with us, but the age has passed away. The Bible is now extremely little read in any class. There are survivals of the old homely domestic reading of the Bible, but they are only survivals, growing rare as old folk die. At this day it is a quite unfamiliar book in cottage and villa and hall. It is unique, it is honoured, but it is not read. It never before was so profoundly studied by scholars; but I believe it is less read for devotional purposes than it was at any time during the last three centuries.

The recognition of this fact must affect the preacher's use of the Bible.

To define how our pastoral use of the Bible is being affected by this unfamiliarity with the Bible is not easy. If one had to sum it up in a paradox, I should say that it is leading us to put our text at the end instead of at the beginning.

Instead of saying, "These are the words of the Bible, and therefore they are true and authoritative; and therefore such and such must be our belief, and our conduct," we are, as a matter of fact, largely reversing the

process, and saying such and such is the verdict of experience as to conduct, such and such the feeling of our hearts, such and such is true; and we find that the most fundamental principles of that conduct which experience shows to be right, and the profoundest expressions of those feelings and truths which command our loyalty, are to be found, with an unrivalled fitness of expression, in the texts of the Bible. The wider our experience, the more human and noble our thought—it is already there in the Bible. Our philosophy is indeed widened by all sorts of knowledge of which the writers of the Bible had no conception; but feeling is deeper than knowledge, and it is their feeling, their spiritual insight, which inspires us to interpret our own feeling, and to see how all our new knowledge deepens that feeling. Most of all, we find that the total ideal of human life and conduct, and of man's relationship to God, is expressed in Jesus Christ. He therefore becomes the end, the goal, to which we lead our people; in the light He sheds on human life, they tread on solid ground of experience all the way, and find Him at the end.

This teaching lays stress not on authority, until the authority has been accepted by the heart ; it lays stress on experience, and shows how it vindicates authority. Moreover, it lays stress on those elements in man which are common to us all, not on that which is individual, whether it be learning or feeling or mode of life. Below all our differences of knowledge and ability, all our varieties of temperament and capacity for imagination and emotion, and all the infinite grades of occupation and industry, is the universal human soul. That is the sphere for the pastor ; and his study of the Bible, not as a theologian, constructing a scheme, but as a man and a lover of men, will draw thence for him large draughts of human sympathy. Thus viewed, the Bible will ever be growing more and more to us and our people, and we shall find the old words true fact : "The testimony of the Lord is sure and giveth wisdom unto the simple."



LECTURE V

## ABSTRACT

THE danger of professionalism, and the attitude of the pastor towards the Church.

The justification for part of what is considered professionalism.

The necessity for a strong feeling of Churchmanship.

What it implies in our aims.

The welcome we should give to variety; the effort needed to cultivate wide sympathies.

The attitude of the pastor to the neutrals in a parish, especially of the labouring class; to the thoughtful class who hold aloof from our creeds; and to dissenters.

Our attitude to the National Church, as regards conformity in ritual and doctrine.

The ethics of conformity briefly considered.

The new theology which we may welcome.

The new theology, or philosophy, with which we can make no terms.

The mission of the pastor in contributing to religious philosophy.

## V

### THE ATTITUDE OF THE PASTOR TOWARDS THE CHURCH

I HAVE been speaking of some of the causes which may altogether deter some men who possess truly pastoral qualifications from taking Holy Orders, and which probably affect you all to some extent.

I have spoken of the uncertainty as to fitness: the doubt whether the ministry offers at the present day a good field for social and moral usefulness. There is the hesitation arising from the fear that for a man to take Holy Orders is to commit himself irrevocably to opinions which further acquaintance with philosophy or science might render untenable; or to a view of the inspiration and authority of the Bible which he no longer holds; and now, lastly, there is with others an aversion to

professionalism—the fear that ordination will compel a man to adopt permanently the ecclesiastical or clerical way of looking at things, which is thought to be inseparable from the work of the ministry.

This last difficulty resolves itself into the attitude of the pastor, *quâ* pastor, towards the Church, and forms the subject of this lecture.

It is the most difficult theme of all, because such phrases as “the Church,” “professionalism,” “the ecclesiastical and clerical way of looking at things,” are extremely difficult to define. But every layman knows how alien and unattractive the clerical attitude, as popularly conceived, is to the lay mind. I will not attempt to describe it, except by indicating in general the exaggerated value clergy seem to them to set on things relatively unimportant; the bitterness and impracticability that they associate with all ministers of religion, when they touch education and politics; and, to turn to a very different subject, the inconsistency of professing high unworldly ideals in the pulpit with exhibiting what seems very ordinary conduct and temper out of it.



I am not going to deny or extenuate, still less defend, our besetting sins. But I offer two remarks for consideration, and would remind such objectors, first, that in the world as it is, a high degree of onesidedness in emphasis is necessary to secure attention to the spiritual, in presence of the urgency and clamour of the material; still more, if any reformation of conduct or revival of old truths, or any recognition of a new duty or truth, is to be effected. It is difficult, we know, to "be angry and sin not"; it is quite as hard to see clearly a great forgotten or neglected duty or truth, and not to press it out of season and out of all proportion. Such insistence is sure to be represented as exaggerated, impracticable, bitter, whether it is so or not.

And secondly, all these defects and faults are not characteristics of the clergy in so far as they are pastors, but in so far as they fall short of being pastors. For the true pastor can scarcely be a party man. The pastoral spirit is incompatible with party spirit; that is, it is incompatible with precisely those faults which the laity chiefly associate with the ministerial

profession. This is seen to be true the moment it is uttered. *Quâ* pastor a man has no heart and no time for the relatively unimportant; one cannot associate the pastoral temper with bitterness and impracticability, nor again with worldliness. "I have no fault to find with Mr. So and So," is constantly the verdict of the layman on the clergyman who is first and foremost a pastor; and very many more of us are first and foremost pastors than any one would gather from the utterances of controversialist clergy, or of those who dislike the clergy.

If then men fall into those clerical vices, it is because to that extent they are not pastors. I assure you that you may avoid all those unpleasant professional characteristics, on one condition—that you give yourself to pastoral work. There is the best security against clerical deterioration.

I am deprecating militant clericalism; but you must note that the absence of militant clericalism is only a negative virtue. It may easily pass into the vice of deadly indifference, unless it is combined with something that looks at first sight like its opposite—I mean an ardent

conviction that a pastor can do little for his own people, except by strengthening among them the bond and the spirit of churchmanship; and that he can do still less for the people outside the direct influence of religious bodies, except through the faith and ministry and example of an inner circle of Church folk. His personal influence on his own people is transient and slight compared to the influence they will exercise on one another, if they are fused into one body, inspired and moved by the life of Christ consciously realised as living in them. In this sense the pastor, though not a party man, must be a very strong churchman indeed. That is his *raison d'être* so far as he is a pastor—to keep a flock together. He must idealise his congregation and his inner circle, and magnify their office. He must remember that they are verily the children of God, and members of Christ. Our own virtues, such as they are, could not be even what they are but for the stimulus of this membership; and if they are to grow greater, it must be from strengthening this bond of union, and from a fuller realisation of

the brotherhood, the privileges, and the duties of the Church. It is as members related to one another, and in a joint relation to Christ, that each will grow. Every leaf on the vine is helped by every other leaf, as well as by the root. It was through the felt unity of Israel, as God's Servant and Child, that individual Jews felt their own sonship to God. Moreover, the realisation of a common life and interest in the Church widens people's minds, and prepares them for larger thoughts as nothing else does. It is an epoch in a person's life when he passes out of sheer religious individualism. His association with others multiplies the channels of influences upon him, and confirms his fleeting good impulses. People learn from one another. Public spirit and Church feeling are thus great educators. Their stimulating and mind-opening influence is remarkable. Worship, moreover, especially sacramental worship, scarcely exists apart from the common life which centres round a church.

It is only by association with others, indeed only by sacramental association, that the full characteristic Christian life can be realised.

One who holds this view, and sees that his own influence is only one factor in the total influence of the Church upon a man, will have an inner defence against the besetting professionalism.

Pastoral theology therefore teaches, as the result of experience, the need of a very deep loyalty to the Church, as the organ through which the divine Life in men finds its nourishment and its expression both towards man and towards God; and it teaches also the necessity of combining this deep churchmanship with perfect humility. Such a combination ensures a complete freedom from the mannerism, and temper, and priggishness, and still more from that occasional aggressiveness, which laity resent as clerical—from what I have called militant and self-assertive clericalism, the disagreeableness of which ranks high among the temporary causes that deter men from seeking Holy Orders.

Loyalty to the Church means the desire to strengthen the bond and spirit of this society in Christ as a great spiritual and educating force. This intelligent, convinced loyalty is a necessity to a pastor in his efforts to assist in the

development of character. But it must be a *great* churchmanship; it must be loyalty to great aims, to great principles; loyalty to Christ, to His precepts, His example, His temper. Let us teach our people the things which are great in a true perspective—to be unselfish and even self-sacrificing for one another; never to speak ill of others, or misrepresent them, least of all those who differ from us in religious observances; let us teach them to be liberal in money and service, as the tribute of their love to God and man; let us teach them to pray and discipline themselves by purity and self-control; let us help them to realise Christ and the Holy Spirit in their own hearts; “let us take care,” as Jeremy Taylor said to his clergy, “that we make our people Christians,” and then we shall find that they so love the prayers, and sacraments, and life of the Church, that they have become good churchmen. Let us leave to controversialists who have not the care of souls all curious and insoluble technical questions about “validity,” and “succession,” and “authority.” They do not concern us as pastors: and let us never lay stress on

any points of Christian faith or worship or conduct as necessary unless they can be manifestly shown to be so, and are admitted to be so by the experience of men. To insist on distinctions, to exhibit the sectarian and exclusive habit of mind, is not pastoral. Be loyal to great aims, and educate the people towards them. No one has such opportunities as we have for correcting gradually the false perspectives, and the lower conceptions of religion, that are so common. You must not, of course, be always trying to "preach down" false or lower conceptions of God and of the Church by direct argument; but by dwelling on the vision in every heart of charity and the thought of social righteousness, and the kingdom of God among men, we silently doom those former conceptions to a painless extinction; we antiquate them; we relegate them to the unimportant. A few years pass: there has been no revelation, nothing startling; but the light has increased, and with it reality and piety.

Loyalty to these great aims, to the love of God and man, is at the base of the pastoral character; but there is room for large diversities

among us, which we must learn not only to tolerate, but to welcome. It should be part of our pastoral theology, as it is part of God's will, to welcome diversity as a human characteristic, reconciled, as it may be, by a higher bond of union. Think constantly that all men are in some degree manifestations of God; that all good men have something to teach us of the Infinite God. They are fragments, units, in the vast total. "Nous sommes les chiffres, Il est la Somme," as Victor Hugo says. From every one something of His light is reflected.

This thought helps us to correct a species of self-asserting individualism which implies that no one else should be other than what we are. What a poor, dull, unprogressive world one type alone would make! The true idea of a church, as St. Paul taught us, is the sympathetic union in one body of very diverse members. We forget this in practice. We are to feel neither our own vigorous individualism, nor that of others, as narrowly restrained by authority or merged in routine; it is rather to be hallowed by mutual respect and sincere humility, and by fixing our thoughts on great aims. How



dare we belittle others? As Bishop Creighton said, "With the cry 'Arise, shine,' sounding in our ears, how can we waste time disputing about the shape of our lanterns?"

I dwell on this point because I see how much the influence of good men is limited by their inability to enter into the varieties of feeling and emotion that actuate others, and how this fault of the clergy deters young laymen from taking orders. It is unpastoral, it is even to be called wrong, not to force ourselves to respond sympathetically to the æsthetic, the symbolical, the impressive ritual that appeals to the emotion of some of our people. It may not accord with our natural temperament; we may have strong prejudices against it; but the fact stands that a certain stateliness and dignity of worship, with its historic associations and its liturgic minuteness, appeals to some souls, as nothing else appeals, and opens the gates of the soul to the divine presence. We must welcome this as one of the aspects of the many-sided divine spirit in man. Not less must we welcome those who can evoke the soul in their hearers in the least ornate of services, by

passionate, though they seem to us unbalanced, appeals to the sense of sin, to the need of salvation, and to the redemption by Christ. Nor again are we to disparage others whose heart is so set on brotherliness, justice, and righteous dealing, that they incline to regard with impatience all efforts to secure precision either of ritual or doctrine. We, as pastors, must recognise all varieties of religious temperaments, and help them to understand one another by our own sympathetic understanding of all. Some of us may recall a striking sermon by Phillips Brooks on "Symmetry of Character," from the text "The length, and the breadth, and the height of it were equal."

And this large sympathy can only be attained by our loyalty to great aims. I emphasise this because I see our danger, and the harm this militant party temper does to the Church. We pastors have our own "world," from which we must strive and pray to keep "unspotted." Each of us has a "professional world," which is vehement for some passing phase of things; we play to a little applauding theatre of our own choosing, which exalts into principles what are

really minor matters, and thus generates a temper in which the great message is forgotten, and in which men seem to have no words, no heart, no faculty for what is really spiritual and eternal. We must "keep ourselves unspotted from" this professional "world."

Again, loyalty to the Church is more than the uniting spirit of churchmanship in a congregation, and more than the sympathy for many types of religious mind which grows up with loyalty to great aims. It implies the right attitude of mind towards those who seem to us outside. The error into which, from a sort of excess of churchmanship, we are strongly tempted to fall is to regard the Church in any parish as coextensive with those who "go to church," and to regard all others as outsiders, schismatics, agnostics, or hostile. This is an easy line to take. And if the pastor thinks this in his heart, his congregation will make it plain in word and action that they think so too; and then there grow up the evils of Pharisaism, and the fold is henceforth fenced with barbed wire.

What are we to think of the many "neutrals"

in every large parish — the hundreds to whom the clergy are simply nothing, and to whom the expression of religion is unmeaning? We must remember that God has so created men and society, and labour and custom have so fashioned them, that only a few are capable of entering keenly into the feelings of devotion: the faculties of worship in most men are nearly dormant; spiritual emotions have not been developed in them. We know this perfectly well to be true from the experience of periods of our own life. Let us honestly admit this fact. They may be good men and women, with a real loyalty to right, living quite as good and decent lives as their neighbours who go to church or chapel; but they have little consciousness of the invisible, and no conscious need of worship. They have no use, or very occasional use, for church. Are these outsiders? or are they a part of our Church? Most really a part of our Church. They have been baptized; most of them know a little from Day and Sunday-school about the Bible and the Faith. They can repeat the Lord's Prayer. Many have been confirmed: they know the Christian

temper and Christian character as well as we know it. Perhaps they show it as well as we do. All sorts of reasons, good and bad, but all at bottom the same reason, keep them away from church—the limitations of faculties and temperament; but they are a section of our people not to be regarded as outsiders. I want you to regard these non-churchgoers with generous and discriminating respect. I am sure that this way of regarding them will grow on you at last, if you have the pastoral spirit; but one would like to anticipate the slow teachings of experience. There is something in the pastoral work of a parish, in the daily contact with labouring men and women, apart from all churchgoing, that brings home the closeness of Christ to our working and common humanity. Jesus of Nazareth in the early years of His manhood, before He was called by the Spirit to His public ministry, was a working man of Nazareth; and His parables and teaching show how familiar to Him were the details of the peasant life. Let us think of Him thus at times, and not always as a person of the Holy Trinity; nor see Him always as a vision

of the Divine on earth ; nor even always as the Teacher and Healer and Redeemer. In this thought of Him, as leading the homely life of bread-winner, not then less the Christ than when He hung on the Cross, we can see perhaps how labour was an element in His human training ; and we shall more truly respect the worth of the hard hand, and the bent back, and the shrunken figure, and the toil-stained face of working folk, even if they come to no church. The life of labour and toil is of the nature of a sacrament. Grace comes to men through it. It is a purifier of life. What dangers and sins beset those who do not labour ! These men and women are not outsiders, because they get their heavenward discipline in the stern fields of labour, and are as yet all undeveloped in their consciousness of the presence of the invisible ; and are often, as it may seem to us, terribly materialised by their limitations. That, however, is not the materialism that demoralises like the materialism of full-fed idleness. The thought of the invisible, and a conscious loyalty to Christ, can be only very slowly awakened in them by much personal effort on the part of

some Christian man or woman. But their lives are wonderfully sweetened by such an awakening, and their humility is often an instruction to their teacher.

There is also another class of men and women whom we must keep in mind—who are willing to accept Christ, but who do not accept the Creed. When that possibility first dawns on a man it staggers him. It seems impossible. What does it mean?

It means that the Christ who is revealed as a whole in the New Testament appeals to men's hearts, and wins their acceptance because that sublime Personality is not out of harmony with their ideal. How should it be? Christ is the eternal Son of Man, and the eternal belongs to every age.

But such men can never forget that the thinkers and philosophers and preachers of the early centuries, from whom our creeds come, not only accepted Christ as the revelation of God and man, and as the atonement and hope of the world, but they formulated what they thought in terms of their own age. And those intellectual forms are of necessity passing,

temporary, relative. Christ is eternal; creeds have in them an element of the temporary.

The true pastor must have intelligent sympathy and deep respect for such men as these, even though he fails to understand their difficulty. Let us think how would Christ, the *pastor pastorum*, deal with them. These are not wolves to be kept outside the fold. Not a few of them put us all to shame by the sincerity, humility, patience, devoutness of their lives. The Church fails of Catholicity till it finds, not a place only, but an honoured place, for men of this devout and philosophic and faithful temperament and training.

And what shall I say of the pastor's attitude towards dissenters? On this I have a strong opinion, based on experience and observation.

The simple fact is that there exists no sort of bitterness between the church and chapel folk in our parishes. It cannot be fanned into flame even by the fury of agitators. If we only read correspondence and articles in newspapers, or believed what noisy political people say on platforms, we should be hopelessly wrong. Thanks to the good feeling, the common



Christianity of the masses, and the removal of inequalities, the real relation is unquestionably one of immovable friendliness. "We're chapel folk here, sir, in this house; but I'm glad to see you." "Sit ye down, sir, and welcome." That is the all but universal tone, when one calls at a house. So we have a talk; and it ends with the same friendliness as it began. "We're all going to the same place, I take it. I'll give you a look in some time"; (that means come to church). "Ye'll call again, I hope." That is the typical, almost the universal, relation between a pastor and his dissenting parishioners. There is no thought on either side of proselytising as conceivable. So my advice is to accept heartily their point of view; express and feel the most sincere hope that their chapel, Sunday school, and Day school give them what we all need. You may talk to them about Bible reading and prayer and the religious bringing up of their children, and, if it is opportune, you may pray with them. But never try to find out what they have been taught; never argue. It is simply the fact that "we are going to the same place."

It is the fact that, even apart from all family traditions, the more homely preaching and less liturgical methods and ministry of the chapel suit many of them better than anything we can yet offer. The attitude which is true to fact is to regard all as fellow-workers in the same Church: all are one flock, if not one fold. The actual separation between the congregations (apart from politics) has in it little or nothing of the temper of schism; and we must be extremely careful not to make schismatic in temper what is only in their eyes a difference in administration. All are our allies if they are helped by chapel to lead godly lives, to observe Sunday, to read the Bible, to avoid plain sins, and bring up their children well. By their fruits we know them. The Church to which a pastor of a parish must be loyal includes, therefore, the churchmen, the neutrals, the thoughtful outsiders, and the dissenters of his parish.

These last remarks about our loyalty to the greater Church lead me, to avoid misunderstanding, to speak next of our loyalty to the Church of England in particular. It is of that

Church that we are ministers ; and it is within the limits of that Church, from first to last, that our activities must lie. We must not think that within those limits are found virtue and saintliness, and outside it, speaking generally, worldliness, ignorance, and superstition. To be a pastor in the Church of England means that we have chosen our path. Men can only work effectively by limiting their programme of action, and this is our limit. Our path is that of the Church of England. Who are we to judge others? The Church of England is large enough and good enough for us. We accept its limits. We accept its English, Anglican, notions and characteristics. If we are loyal to our national Church, our catholicity will take care of itself. Catholicity is not like undenominationalism, a residuum which remains when all that is individual is struck out. Just as undenominationalism degenerates into a faithless and lifeless kind of Unitarianism, or Theism, or less, from striking out every thought which is not equally approved by all Christians, so denationalised catholicity drifts into a mechanical mediævalism, galvanised for

a while into activity, without its natural roots, and without its simple faith. Let us be loyal to that English catholicity, native to the soil and rooted in it, which the centuries have given us.

As pastors of the Church of England, we declare then our conviction that the union of our sheep in this fold of ours serves a high spiritual end; and that, from childhood upwards, in home and in school, and in all the cross-currents and storms of life, the faithful membership of our Church is a great safeguard and help to a good and pious life. The organisation of our Church in worship and teaching and sacraments is, we declare, to be our main instrument in bringing men to know and follow Christ, and to make their hearts the home of His Spirit. It is a net that can catch and retain those who would otherwise be homeless and isolated, and would lose those spiritual influences which ripen the soul. Our loyalty to our Church is based, therefore, on our experience and conviction of the disciplinary, educating, and inspiring influence of belonging to such a body as ours; on our seeing how it restrains from worldliness and

sins; how it checks vulgarities and conceits and arrogances; how it creates humility and reverence and refinement.

But again this loyalty to our Church is much more than sentiment. It is a pledge of obedience. We pledge ourselves, as plainly as words can pledge us, to "obey our Ordinary, submitting ourselves to his godly judgments," "to minister the doctrine and Sacraments as this Church and Realm hath received the same." The attitude of promoting party aims, disregarding the judgment of the Bishops, is, however we may gloss it, a breach of our word and of our loyalty that nothing can justify. It exhibits the unholy and wilful temper of schism. We may desire more freedom and elasticity of services, and as Church reformers we may press for more, and we may use the very large liberty we possess. But we owe willing obedience to our Bishop, and all the more because disobedience rarely now involves legal penalties or pecuniary loss, and wins the admiration of the unthoughtful partisan. Such disobedience shows all the sinfulness of schism without its element of self-sacrifice.

And our relation to the doctrine and theology of our Church is governed by the same rule. We are equally bound to submit to our Bishop in the matter of teaching as of order. We are servants of the Church, of the Church of England; and to be servants implies humility and obedience. Our obedience and loyalty are due to the whole body of Christ. We are not at liberty to blurt out any views that for the time attract us and admit of some justification; we speak, indeed, as ambassadors of God, but also as messengers of the Church, and we may compromise others by our words as by our actions; and if this disloyalty is less injurious, it is only because few people understand words, and all can see actions, when they are disloyal.

The condition, in a word, of effective work is co-operation, and this condition is far too little realised among us. But co-operation implies willing self-limitation, self-suppression; it is inconsistent with the wilfulness of individualism, with the spirit, which, if unrestrained by the material bonds of money and position, would become schism. We have no right to claim

and receive the benefits and pay of a Church to whose doctrine as a whole we are not loyal. To do so is not honest.

But in saying this we again open a very large and very difficult question, which can only be slightly touched on here, viz., the Ethics of Conformity. What are the limits of ethical freedom in continuing the use of fixed creeds and formularies, when we have ground for thinking that we do not use them either precisely in the sense in which they were used by those who drew them up, or precisely in the sense in which they are repeated by the uninstructed and unphilosophical members of our congregations? We must admit the difficulty that arises from our having to express our belief in the great truths of Christianity in their fourth or sixth century dress.

But there are counter considerations.

I can only offer a few remarks on this point. It demands separate and careful and full treatment.

(1) All language is metaphorical when applied to religious abstractions; and all such language is approximate, poetical, parabolic.

All such language has, moreover, a history. We do a grave injustice to the past, no less than to the present, if we think that the great thinkers and divines who drew up our formularies were blind to this fact, and infer that we must interpret all their words as prosaically exact. They also knew the imperfection of words.

(2) It is much more possible for a congregation to join in worship that is poetical and archaic in its language, than in one which is modernised and "up to date," and therefore to be judged and interpreted by either a colloquial or a philosophic standard. The mind engaged in worship is not analytical and reasoning; it is devotional, receptive. Worship is much more akin to poetry than to science, to art than to philosophy. Worship is, moreover, an act of the Church as a whole; and it is a result of its continuous life that the Church uses the prayers and creeds and hymns of its youth with a fulness of association and feeling that could not gather round new words.

(3) If any one tries to reduce to exact



statements the points in which fixed creeds and formularies embarrass himself personally, he will find how very few they are. And if it then occur to him that our Lord, in teaching as He did in the Sermon on the Mount, was at far more points in conflict with the old law, and yet described Himself as only "fulfilling" it, he will be disposed to concede that we may enlarge the interpretation of our formularies without contradicting them, and purify from what is temporary without destroying them. Our business is always to look at the spirit, not at the letter. The Church must have fixed terms of membership, which cannot be altered year by year; but it must also have the full freedom of growth and interpretation. It is death to prefer the letter to the spirit—death, as it was in Judaism to retain the lower sacrificial type of worship in presence of the higher prophetic type. We must have fixed terms of membership; but their interpretation must grow with our growth. Christ only demanded that men should follow Him, and we have no right to ask more. The creeds are as fences, given us to define the fruitful pasture, and to

warn against wandering into the deserts. But they belong to the age of struggle and of imperfection. As our Church approaches its ideal, its creed will become more poetical, and approximate to a *Te Deum*.

It is the scientific mind applied to theology that frames the formula, and the scientific mind has its place; but the mind of the mystic also can work within those formulæ, and must claim the right to interpret them, and in every age of the Church has done so. Moreover, we cannot think of God's knowledge as other than intuitive, unreasoned; and it follows that the more closely our nature approximates to the Divine the more intuitive will become our religion, and the more religious our intuitions.

The continuity, moreover, of our Church is a continuity of worship, of sacraments, of ministry, of pastoral care, and of organisation, much more than it is a continuity of theological formulæ and opinion.

I may add that the fixity of interpretation of our formularies in our own Church, if it really existed, would be as fatal to truth and as embarrassing as the doctrine of papal

infallibility, only throwing the infallibility into the past instead of the present. And if we even pretend to fixity, if we regard any deviation from past interpretations as of necessity a step on the down-grade, and frown on and denounce those who take it, we are guilty at least of a strange confusion of ideas if we remain members of the Reformed Church. A Reformed Church must be a Reforming Church.

I claim therefore for the pastor, on all grounds, that he may be utterly loyal to his Church, and yet exercise in his conscience a large liberty in the interpretation of her formularies. It is not disloyal to the Church to endeavour to find place in those formularies for the new theology of the philosopher and man of science, which welcomes the conception of a God manifesting Himself in all historical religions and in all nature—in her laws and uniformities, and especially in man; and welcomes therefore the mergence of the natural into the supernatural, and can admit no discontinuities as necessary. It is not disloyal to welcome a theology which turns our faces more towards social righteousness and the

bringing in of God's kingdom on earth, than towards our own individual salvation and the final judgment. It is not disloyal to welcome a theology which is at once more philosophical, more mystical, and more practical than the old, and read it all into the old prayers and creeds and liturgies. They are full of it, when we have eyes to see. We look for God more and more in the life of men. Perhaps our truest worship of Him is to share His love for all living things. All else is but the cloister of the temple, the approaches to the shrine: this is the Holy of Holies; and no words or symbols shall detain us as we press onwards to find God Himself. This is the temper of the newer theology, and should be the temper of the pastor.

This new theology that I have so briefly indicated is to be welcomed, and may be welcomed, with perfect loyalty to our Church. But it may not be amiss here to insert a word of warning, and to say that there is also a new theology with which, as far as I can see, there can be no compromise at all.

There exists a theology, or rather a philo-

sophy, which practically confuses God with the world; it identifies them. Now it appears to me that the antithesis of the old theology between God and the world is true to human experience, and that in this respect the new theology is false. The truth of a theology, remember, rests solely on its correspondence with facts, its power of elucidating and co-ordinating human experiences. The newer theology admits duty, morality, righteousness, but has no place for grace as the action on man of the Spirit of God, no place for union with God, no place, we may almost say, for God at all. A theology which explains human experiences, hitherto regarded as arising from the action of the Spirit of God, as individual and unreal illusions and delusions is no theology, and should be called by another name. It should be called psychophenomenology. If Nature and Grace are not different, then there is no Grace: if Nature and God are identical, then there is no God. If, indeed, experience, broadly and fairly considered, should lead to this conclusion, accept it we must in the long run: *magna est veritas*. But the voice of

experience, to which we bow, points to an external influence on man for which there is no place in the "new theology."

I know that these lectures are not the place for these discussions; but pastoral theology, without discussing them, has perhaps the final word to say on them. For it is simply the fact that in pastoral work this new theology is dumb. It is struck with paralysis by the side of the frightened, the hardened, or penitent sinner, or the dying man and the dying child. It is dumb in the school. It is dumb in a man's own chamber. It cannot pray. It is the pastor, he who ministers to the human soul in its needs, who is the authority on experience; and from the aggregate evidence and conclusions of the pastor, that is, of experience, there lies no appeal.

Slowly is built up the temple of religion, in which man meets God. Every age, every nation, every religion has its contribution to make; and it is our privilege, as pastors in the Church of England, to have good grounds for believing that we also may contribute, according to our ability, to that supreme work.

God has given to that Church a great mission to a great race and in a great age; and if we are faithful we may do something permanent, however small, in building up His Temple. I know no greater call to Holy Orders than this.





## LECTURE VI

## ABSTRACT

THE subject of this lecture the pastor's attitude towards his own special flock.

The attractiveness of pastoral work.

The pastor is the representative of the ideal and spiritual sides of life. The natural religious instincts of a congregation.

Their need of idealism.

The need of teaching as to the Atonement ; of comfort under the sorrows and stress of life ; of inspiration to action ; of rebuilding of shattered faith.

To know of these needs in individuals is the best preparation for sermon-writing and other pastoral work.

Early years of the ministry in some respects the most fruitful.

It is said that there is widespread indifference and unbelief.

On analysis this indifference is often a rightful suspension of judgment.

Unbelief also needs analysis. Our need of modesty ; of refraining from judging others ; and of simplicity.

Final words : the security for the fulfilment of the pledge taken in Holy Orders rests on the continuity of personal identity.

## VI

### THE PASTOR'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIS CONGREGATION

I HAVE now completed my attempt to show what a sphere for varied, thoughtful, progressive activity is offered by the ministry of our Church. It is no *cul-de-sac*: there is room in it for ability and goodness of every kind. Indeed, I can honestly congratulate you on your choice, if you choose Holy Orders as your life's work. From a rather large acquaintance with town clergy in the North, I can confidently say that they are almost universally vigorous, earnest, hopeful, happy. I meet none who wish they had been something else; the *militia est potior* is a sentiment unknown to us. And the reason is plain. Our work is of a kind which to a man of ordinary sympathy and brotherliness and

intelligence constantly grows in interest. It places us in natural, unsought, and welcome relations with nearly all the people round us. And this is almost the greatest happiness a man can have. Two young men of similar calibre and character go to live in a town, and one of the two is a curate. Of these two the one cannot at once come, the other cannot help coming, into personal, kindly, happy, and ever-growing relations with all sorts of people. It is this that makes life rich and full, for it gives what human nature needs, the linkage of the part to the whole.

Moreover, this work is indescribably varied. The description of the town parson's day, take what day you will, would be so interesting that any one on reading it would say that of course it was an exceptional, not an average, day. But with all these interesting and important details of work I cannot now deal.<sup>1</sup>

Again, a curate cannot help feeling that he is wanted. There are more doctors and lawyers and schoolmasters than can find

<sup>1</sup> See Father Dolling's *Ten Years in a Portsmouth Slum*, or the Rev. Peter Green in the *Treasury* for January 1903.

patients and clients and pupils. But no clergyman is struggling with others for his bread, and no one finds himself superfluous. Society would not offer him, as Carlyle says it would offer others, "a good round sum to go and hang himself." If he is kindly, sincerely religious, unaffected, and industrious, his people do more than welcome him; they love and respect him for his own sake, and for what he represents. These human relationships, and this sense of being wanted, sweeten life. If they lead, as they should lead as your experience deepens, to the sympathy of heart with heart in prayer, and in conversation, and in real friendship, then life is more than sweet, it is blessed.

I have spoken in successive lectures of a pastor's essential qualifications; of his attitude towards social questions, towards scientific and philosophic problems, towards the Bible, towards the Church at large, and all the varied elements that compose his parish; and now it remains in this my last lecture to think of his mental attitude towards his own special flock. What is he to them?—a Director? a Priest? a Teacher? an Example? a Messenger? a

Watchman? a Steward of the Lord? an Awakener of the unconverted? a Shepherd of the converted? the Channel and Minister of the Grace of God? Yes! he is all these and more, if God enables him "to perceive and know what things he ought to do, and also gives him grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same."

He is to them, in these and other ways, often the sole accredited representative of the ideal, spiritual, unearthly, eternal side of life. Think of this. The sole representative! The church is the one consecrated building in the parish; consecrated by immemorial tradition and sentiment, as well as by law. The cross it uplifts is often the one permanent material witness to Christ, and the parson the one man solemnly set apart, perhaps for a lifetime, as the pastor in things divine of all those souls. If he is unfaithful, there is no one else to take his place. His presence excludes others. This thought should stimulate us to the utmost, and help to keep us faithful.

Let us look at some of the ideal and spiritual sides of life, in order to focus more

clearly the nature of pastoral work with our own people : and for the moment we will think chiefly of preaching ; for in church we see our own people collected. Let us think of the congregation, as it gathers for a service.

Why do they come ? What draws them in winter from their comfortable firesides, or in summer from sunny fields and lanes ? There is, deep founded in their hearts and souls, a natural religious instinct and ideal. That ideal is the product of centuries of English Christianity ; not of our ancient Church alone, but of Puritan and Nonconforming Churchmanship as well. It is the sober fear of a Living God, and trust in His Providence ; it is the love of justice and domestic purity ; in a word, it is that which we define in our Litany as “the true worshipping of God, righteousness and holiness of life.” This is the centre and heart of their religion ; and a very noble centre—the light of God Himself in their hearts. Life is often very difficult for them, very stern, very obscure. They do not want light-hearted amateur solutions from young men who do not know life ; but they do

need and value an ideal of righteousness and holiness; and they do need and desire the thought of God our Father, of Christ our Saviour, and the Holy Spirit our Comforter, the thought of worship, of prayer, of duty, to be kept before them. We have not in England the Scotch love of dogmatic precision, nor the love of the Latin race for "assisting" at a ceremonial; but we have a truly English feeling for religion which we must try to understand, to gratify, and to educate and strengthen.

What our men and women want is a consecration of Sunday by reverent and real worship, that supplies a felt hunger in their hearts. There is a power in public worship to uplift, to encourage, to assure us of the reality of the spiritual world, to enable us to realise the existence of "the mystical body." It inspires and stimulates as nothing else does.

Sermons also are enjoyed—"we want to hear good words on a Sunday," as one of our congregation said to me. They love to hear the Bible well read, the prayers really prayed,



the confession said as sins should be confessed, hymns and chants well chosen, well sung. Reverence, reality, truthfulness, warmth—these are the necessities. Nothing but Idealism, idealism in worship, art, and instruction, can stir the souls and warm and comfort and uplift the hearts of those who live all the week in hard, monotonous, exacting, and often anxious work. Never forget how ceaseless the pressure is on them—how far greater it is than anything we have ever borne. You will be surprised at many things when you come to work, but at nothing more than at the value and reality to the working folk of those services that you may now be treating lightly, as if they were a routine, and an interruption, and even a bore.

If you come among them as a true man, with any sympathy, with any real insight into those difficulties of life which try faith and test temper; any respect and reverence for men and women who are undergoing far harder discipline, far deeper experiences, than yours; any reasoned hopefulness and confidence in God; above all, with any spirit of love as to

brothers in Christ, "incorporate in the mystical body"—then you will not fail to learn as well as teach, and then you may teach as well as learn.

What are the needs, the desires, of the congregation to whom we shall be called to minister? Put aside for a moment those, if there are any, who feel no need and have no desire, who are satisfied if the service "goes" in the usual way, and the sermon is of the ordinary length, and in familiar phrase, with nothing in it so interesting or real as to excite a suspicion of its orthodoxy. Besides these full-fed and lazy sheep, of whom there *may* be some, there certainly and always are sheep that are hungry; and it is these whom we are bidden to feed. Can we read in their eyes, or imagine, what it is they need?

As we get to know them, we learn that one is saying, "Teach me. I read about Jesus Christ; but it all seems so unreal, to have happened so long ago, so far away. I do not see Him: I love Him, I sometimes think; but I do not understand. Death is drawing near to me, day by day; and life is very perplexing.

Teach me His words, and how I may live in His spirit, and be safe. Help me to understand. How did His coming, His death, affect me? Would not all the world be going on just the same if it had never happened? I am sore perplexed: teach me. How did Christ save me?"

There are times when we can do without answering this question; when we can rest on centuries of Christian experience that He does save us; when we can simply say, with the hymn:—

He died that we might be forgiven;  
He died to make us good:  
That we might go at last to Heaven,  
Saved by His precious blood.

But you will not meet the needs of these hungry sheep till you have the Gospel of the Atonement in your heart of hearts; founded on the Incarnation and the essential Divinity of Christ, and purged from the crudities with which it has been so long associated.

And another says: "Comfort me. This life has brought me strangely little joy. I am surrounded with troubles and bereavements;

life is monotonous and weary, and often sad: I am getting old, and I see no hope of change. Heaven seemed nearer when I was a child. Comfort me. Must this weary life go on unrelieved till strength fails, and darkness comes over me, and I sink into the unknown beyond? Surely Christ came to comfort such as me. Have you no strengthening word for such as we are, who toil and sleep and die?"

And to meet these needs we must have more than a kindly, sympathetic, cheery word and manner; we need to "comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

Another of a different temperament says: "Inspire me: lead me into action. Tell me what to do." I wish there were more of these; but there are always some; and we must think of them. There is always, if we can but find it, the element of heroism in human nature; and that gift, except where it is very strong, an exceptional gift of God, is only brought out by the call to heroism. Such an one says: "I have taken Christ as my Hero, my Leader: there is none like Him; I see in Him the Saviour

of the world. I will work for Him; but you must tell me how. I want no arguments—I want to share in noble action. Noble action justifies and verifies my faith.” There is a great deal of latent heroism in our race; and I fear our Church is slow to see and utilise it. Here is something for us all to do. Christianity is essentially a heroic religion; and when the heroic side of it is concealed, in order to make it acceptable to the unheroic, it becomes tasteless even to them. For even the unheroic appreciate heroism in others.

And there is yet another type of church-goer. Whoever else may be absent from church, there is one type always present, often least individualised—the one who would say: “Rebuild my shattered faith. I once thought that the Christian creed was the expression of a real solution of the mystery of this world. I think so no longer. It may be a symbol of a solution: it may be a garment that conceals the truth. But I want more than a symbol or a garment. Have you anything to say on this life of ours and its meaning?” Such an one appeals to us to show that we have got

behind the conventionalities, and have at any rate begun to fall

Upon the great world's altar-stairs,  
That slope through darkness up to God.

It is a tremendous appeal; and it comes from hundreds who are present in our churches, and from the thousands who are not there. "You, sir," such an one may be pictured as saying—"You, sir, are presumed to have fathomed these things; you have studied theology. Show us that a Divine Justice is still ruling the world; find Him in the secret places of our own hearts; tear away all that conceals Him in your mediæval phrases, and show us still in your Church a living and not a dead God, whom you call on us to worship. The services of the Church cannot soothe or inspire or teach us, unless we are shown how they can be joined in by those who have lost the old childlike faith. Can you show us how to read into the old words a greater and truer meaning than ever?"

Experience will soon bring before your imagination other types of hearers—those who are under stress of strong temptation, and who

need to be taught how to seek God's power to keep them from evil. There are those to whom duty is losing its divine, supernatural sanction; those who are failing to find in the Bible the old stimulus and inspiration it once gave. You must call them up in turn before your thoughts, and think of them in your prayers. To know in this way your congregation and people, as men and women who desire teaching and comfort and inspiration, and the strengthening of faith, is the best preparation for sermons and for all relations with your people. It is to feel that the work is real, that you are dealing with realities, and that you must "draw all your cares and studies this way," in order to make yourself worthier of so great a call.

But I would add, that for many of these duties and relations of which I have spoken the earliest years of a ministry have special advantages, and are sometimes the richest and most fruitful. The higher men rise in the Church, the more do the duties of administration remove them from some of those happy and simple relations with the multitude of young and old in a parish. You enter at once on

your best years. Inexperience is a drawback in some of your duties; it is none at all in cultivating human, friendly relations with your people; and youth has a charm that age has lost and cannot regain.

And if these early years of your ministry are fruitful to others, they are incomparably so to yourself. There is no epoch so inspiring in a young man's life as when he first takes Holy Orders, when he comes to his first parish to learn how to love and teach and lead his people to Christ. His daily work widens his mind and enlarges his heart. It will be really a simple gospel you will preach, and it will be the gospel of your life—that Christ has shown us that God and man are so united that therefore we are all “partakers of the divine nature,” and must respect ourselves and all others for the infinite potentialities of this divine life. This creates a bond of sympathy, even with strange and perverted natures in which the divine likeness is blurred.

But you will perhaps be thinking that I am somewhat highly colouring the desire of a congregation for teaching, comforting, inspira-



tion, and strengthening of their faith. For do we not hear everywhere of widespread indifference to religion, and of widespread unbelief? Are not these, to a candid mind, plainly the characteristics of our age? Is it wise or fair to ignore these characteristics of those outside our churches when we are thinking of our congregation within them?

We must clear our minds upon this point, or we shall be ourselves repeating the same shallow judgment. *Indifference to what? Unbelief of what?* And *in whom* are the indifference and unbelief we are thinking of? We must focus our glasses, and test generalisations such as these by individualisation. We must not confound indifference to us clergy, or to what we have to say, with indifference to religion and to God; or confuse some people's unbelief in what they have mistakenly come to think is the Christian message with unbelief in the eternal verities. We do the men outside, and still more those inside our churches wrong, if we think of them as universally indifferent to religion. People are often inexpressive, unanalytical. A man may

be indifferent to the clergy, but he is not indifferent to religion, as he conceives it. He may suspend his judgment on a good many points to which we professionally attach importance, and we may call that state of mind unbelief. But think how much he has in common with us. We all mean exactly the same thing by a Christian act, temper, and character. The Christian character is as much his ideal as it is ours; and are we sure that he is much farther from it? He is quite sure that religion ought to help a man to be better: that it ought "to do more," as Canon Newbolt has said, "than enable a man to pronounce shibboleth with an ecclesiastical accent." By all that touches this practical religious side of life he is impressible. The enormous sale of religious novels, and other publications, such as Mr. Sheldon's *In His Steps* and similar books, ought to dispel any illusion we may be under as to widespread indifference to religion, or widespread unbelief in Christ as the only possible King of this world. I feel sure that our Lord would not have spoken of "widespread indifference or unbelief" in quite our ordinary tone.

I am not underrating the gravitation towards evil that we must always reckon with as the counter-influence to the work of the Spirit of God: there are and ever will be the temptations of the world and the flesh and the devil; and there is in our age a terrible strain, bodily and mental, for some, and an unendurable monotony of labour for others. We see the effect of all this in many phenomena: in hysteria; in spiritualism; in the rush for amusements and gambling; in the passion for success in competition. The strain of city life among the poor is terrible: it is one of the causes of drink. "Drink," as one of our judges said lately, "is the shortest way out of Manchester." No one ought to underrate the illiterate grossness of much of town life.

Our generation of town dwellers perhaps finds less room and time in heart and life than did our fathers for the higher interests of thought, of training of character, of religion. But these interests are not killed; they are close to the surface, full of life, ready to be called out when the hour comes and the man.

And is indifference to our personal teaching and services to be severely regarded as a sign of spiritual decay? Let each one of us call up one by one the five or six churches nearest our own, and ask ourselves whether, if it became our fate to be parishioners in that particular parish, we should be enthusiastic. Would there not be a real fear of our being ranked as indifferent? Such a reflection may help us to understand how laymen regard us. Nor is it wonderful, or a reproach to us. Few men possess the gift of speaking well and interestingly, or even lucidly, on any subject. The members of the House of Commons are all picked men; we outnumber them by thirty to one; but how few of their speeches do we wish to hear or read? which of them could speak interestingly twice a week for forty years? Yet we are not indifferent to politics. Do not let us confuse indifference to us with indifference to the eternal world and the things of God. Do not let us lightly adopt the prevailing cant about "widespread indifference." When you young men begin to preach, not because a sermon must be delivered, but

because you have something you *must* say, you will find little that you will call indifference.

And I must say one word to caution you against a similar unthinking charge against the world of "unbelief." It is a most important matter for clergy to understand. The tone of unbelief has greatly changed, and what clergy often say of it is now twenty or even fifty years out of date. Scepticism to-day is serious, not light-hearted; conscientious, not scoffing; it is often full of sadness and pain: it is passing here and there into a deeper and stronger but humbler faith, returning to older and simpler lines. It is constantly, as we can all see, associated with a splendid ideal and active life of duty and service and patience, which may well claim our respect for the faith from which it springs. There may be forms and phases of unbelief with which I am not familiar. But I am familiar with what some call unbelief, but which should rightly be called suspension of judgment. This is simply the result of the unconscious acceptance of the axiom of scientific method. That axiom is, in Huxley's words, that "it is our duty to give

unqualified assent to no propositions but those the truth of which is so clear and distinct that they cannot be doubted." If this is a sin, then science, and even reason itself, are of their father the devil. But if they are of God, and part of His way of leading the world to a knowledge of Himself, then the attitude of suspension of judgment, of accepting truths as provisional hypotheses, as working bases of conduct, with degrees of assent varying from implicit trust to a balance of probability, is not a sin, but a duty. "Unbelief" is sometimes only an insolent name for a different, and it may well be a juster, proportion of faith. Professor Chase has recently said that "inability to rank all articles of the Creed on the same level is not equivalent to the denial of any."<sup>1</sup> It will be part of your work to assist in this readjustment of the proportion of faith.

I press on you once more the duty of great respect for all men, and great modesty. How few of us clergy—how very, very few—are at all capable, by education, by experience, and

<sup>1</sup> "The Supernatural Element in our Lord's Earthly Life," a paper read at Sion College, 21st October 1902. Macmillan and Co.

by natural ability, to enter into the philosophic difficulties that gather round any expression of religion.

There is much else that should give us pause ere we talk of "prevailing unbelief." We may reflect that there is scarcely one of the clergy who is not in the attitude of "suspension of judgment" towards statements which some other clergy think it their duty to reiterate as truths, and deem of great importance. And as a rule we are far less patient with one another under such circumstances than laymen are with us. We may reflect also on the way in which the stubborn, and sometimes bitter, resistance to new light and truth, which clergy have constantly shown, strikes an earnest and simple man outside our ranks.

As I have explained before, it is not the duty of us all to be students of criticism or philosophy, or of more than the elements of theology. It is quite plain, at least to any one who has long examined for Holy Orders, that the majority of clergy are not gifted with qualifications for such studies. They are quite right to renounce them, and to devote themselves

to the direct work of highest usefulness, to truly pastoral work, which appeals primarily to qualities of heart and sympathy, and not to those of intellect. But in renouncing such studies a man also finally renounces the right to criticise and condemn students. His own work is a noble one, the offering of an ideal life to all. He has chosen his own path. He must not grudge to others a path on which he does not, and cannot, walk. Our duty is to say with Nicodemus, "Doth the Gospel condemn any man before it hears him?" and run the risk of the retort sure to be once more made, "Art thou also of Galilee?"

There are also phenomena which we must learn to distinguish from unbelief. When we endeavour to explain, in terms of the intellect, our spiritual emotions or impressions, and the motions of our conscience, our explanations will certainly differ, as musicians would differ in attempting to express by music the impressions produced on them by a landscape, or artists in attempting to express their ideals in form and colour. Such explanations as we offer are to be treated not objectively or scientific-



ally, as we treat things in a material world. Differences of expression in such matters are not unbelief. And as all musicians and all artists have more in common with one another than with any less gifted souls, so all spiritual tempers have more in common with one another than with the temper which is not spiritual. And there is much that is truly spiritual in reverent agnosticism.

Humility, therefore, humility, humility. This is essential. Also great simplicity—the teaching of Christ Himself. Recall the words of Erasmus: “I could wish that those frigid subtleties were either completely cut off, or were not the only things the theologians held as certain, and that the Christ pure and simple might be implanted deep within the minds of men.” Above all, the presentation of a gospel of a divine Mediator who saves men from sin. Here we rest on an experience which cannot be questioned. Deep in the heart of man is the felt need of a link with God, the Eternal, the Infinite, the Ideal of man; and the historic Christ is that link, and awakens in each soul, at the moment

that he is fit for it, the divine Life which Christ came to reveal.

I am speaking still of your attitude towards your own special congregation, and the diverse elements there assembled before you. No doubt there are differences between town and country, between South and North, between West End and East End. But the resemblances are deeper than any differences; and I have aimed at implanting in your mind my own conviction that below all the perplexing and bewildering phenomena of our time, at bottom there is a solid faith, too big, I believe, and too strong to be forced into the vessels which were once large enough to contain it. New bottles are needed for the new wine; and the new bottles cannot be made to order. We may have to pass through a long age in which men may feel that conduct is of great importance, but that the sanction for conduct is undiscoverable; in which faith is essential, and yet the reasons for faith are inaccessible or incommunicable. If this is so, then pastoral care, to prevent the wreck of lives, to co-ordinate noble instincts into right

action, is more needed than ever. The clergy of your generation may be called on to help others to live their lives in the greatest freedom of intellectual thought, and in the strictest obedience to moral instincts. That will be a life of faith, and that means an unrelaxed hold on ideals for man as the child of God.

A few words should be said on the attitude in particular of a young clergyman towards laymen, and especially towards those of his own age and similar education, in general society. This presents a difficulty which is acutely felt by some of you. "Is it possible," you ask, "to assume the tone and sentiment of denouncing sin without such forcing of oneself as to be unnatural and even hypocritical? On the one hand, any want of sternness may be felt as condoning sin, and even as encouraging it; and on the other, until one is more schooled into the mind and temper of Christ, is it right to denounce it? Will not our words smack of officialism, and widen the cleavage between layman and cleric?"

When I read letters from some of you that put this difficulty, almost in these words,

before me, it happened that Björnson's story, *The Fisher Maiden*, was lying by me, and I turned to this passage (p. 247): "To my mind," says Odegaard—in speaking of the dangers which attend other professions—"To my mind that calling is most apt to lead us into temptation which induces us to think ourselves righteous because we bring a message from the Righteous One; which deludes us into believing that we have faith because we preach faith to others; or, to speak more plainly, to my mind the priest's calling presents the greatest temptations of all."

The difficulty is a real one: the temptation to pose is real; and to yield is very damaging. No general answer can, in the nature of things, be given, because it is our own best personalities, and not those of others, that we must express. But some isolated remarks may be useful.

No young man can perhaps fully realise what sin is, because he has not yet seen its consequences. "The spirit of your life is lightness and hope." Yes; but you know the need of strictness, the awful power of tempta-

tions from the body, which should make one very merciful and tender in judging others; and you cannot know the results of sins. You may have in your memory the words, "Be sure your sin will find you out." Will you add to it the yet more searching reading of the LXX version, "Ye shall know your sins when the evils overtake you." It is experience that gives the knowledge and the horror of sin, and you cannot at once assume the air of experience.

Then ask yourself what was our Lord's attitude towards sin and sinners. I see no trace in Him of what we should describe as "being shocked." He was as far from this as from encouraging sin. He denounced no sins except those of the religious self-deceivers, the Pharisees. He was indignant with these, and with these only. Try to picture Him as He sat at meat with publicans and sinners, or indeed with Simon the Pharisee. We picture Him as perfectly natural, and feeling nothing but sympathetic sorrow for those who were spoiling and losing their best selves, their true life. We picture Him as unconsciously bringing out

the best side of each man from natural sympathy with Himself. Surely it is possible for a young clergyman in nearly every company so to join in a conversation as to bring out some other and overlooked side; to modify some sweeping and harsh censure of a class or an individual by a remark suggesting a different point of view. We all know people who do this naturally.

But I said "in nearly every company." If we could not trust ourselves in a particular company to be able to say, "Shut up, you brute!" when that might be the only suitable remark, don't let us go into that company. A young man could scarcely imitate Jowett's rebuke, "I think that remark had better not have been made"; still less his well-known treatment of the situation when a guest of distinction at his own table launched on a story that was plainly going to be indelicate: "Let us join the ladies, and finish the conversation in the drawing-room." We must feel strong enough to take our own line anywhere, and not be driven to sheepish silence, where such silence would be a disgrace.

Again, we need not think much about our "influence"—about "doing good." If we can be near to God in ourselves, influence follows. Go rather into society with the wish to get good than to do it. Is it not the very essence of the prig to think himself responsible for putting others right? Above all, be not a prig. Be yourself: but take infinite pains by prayer and humble looking up to God to make yourself better than you are; and then the discipline and experience of pastoral life solves these difficulties for you. Only let us grow in grace.

I have come to the end of my time, and will only say one thing more. When I took Holy Orders at the age of forty-three, a difficulty was placed strongly before me by a scientific friend. I do not doubt you feel it. At the time I was utterly unable to reply. "How," he urged, "can you clergy pledge yourselves as to what you *will* believe? Here is the great workshop of the world's thought humming with business in every department. Criticism, science, philosophy, history, all are working overtime; everything is an open

question, and new truth constantly coming to light. How can you say, whatever you believe now, what you will believe ten years hence?"

I felt there was a reply; but I could not express it then. Can you? It is this. Your pledge to believe in Christ or to follow Him is one of a *personal* kind. You know enough of yourself, and enough of Him, to make it quite certain that as long as your identity is maintained you will love and follow and reverence and worship Him. The pledge thus rests on the security of personal identity. You will find more in Christ; you will develop new power in yourself; but it is not possible that anything inharmonious between yourself and your Master can spring up. You know Whom you have believed.

I shall not shrink from saying that such a pledge is like that of marriage; only far more secure. The pledge to love in marriage is given, it might be urged, in entire uncertainty. Who knows how much both may change? But the reply is plain: that the personal identities do not change, but only develop under mutual influence. The instinctive



attachment begun in youth ripens, deepens, and matures in age. Your affinity to Christ, your realisation of sonship to God, and of the need of doing His work, does not evaporate or change with a discovery in criticism or science.

You have heard the saying of Confucius, that fishermen use baskets to catch fish; and when they have got the fish, they forget the baskets. You too may, as you grow, forget some baskets, but it will be when you have discovered and rightly value the fish within the baskets.

So once more, with all my heart, I congratulate you on the work you have chosen, and let us pray that God will ever guide and enlighten you in this path of service.



## APPENDIX TO LECTURE II

THIS bibliography has been kindly furnished me by Mr. T. R. Marr, M.A., Warden of the Men's House at the University Settlement, Ancoats, Manchester.

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# SCIENCE AND THEOLOGY

OR

An Essay on the Influence  
of Scientific Training on the  
Reception of Religious Truth





## INTRODUCTION

I ASSUME that we may define religious truth as the application of all that may be known to elucidate the relation of man to God. Religious truth is not of a different quality from other truth ; but it is truth consecrated to a particular purpose. Every one is conscious of a certain change in the attitude of the human mind towards religious truth resulting from the extraordinary development and fresh applications of the methods of inductive science during the last century. People may regard this change as likely to be permanent or temporary, as favourable or unfavourable to religion ; but the fact of the change is patent. Also it is practically certain that what is known as scientific training will become more general and more complete and thorough. The effect of the change, moreover, is one which reaches all classes, because it operates indirectly as

well as directly. We have therefore to consider not only the effect on the student himself of his scientific training, but also the effect of the student class, so influenced, on those classes which at present get no direct scientific training. In this way, by indirect influence, the effect of scientific training filters down till it permeates all classes. Moreover, the effects are cumulative and progressive. The influence therefore of such training to-day is not the same as it was thirty years ago, nor even as it was still more recently. The effect cannot therefore be summarised as being this or that. It is a highly complex and varying influence.

As the influence filters down slowly through the various degrees of education, we see to-day reproduced, in the lowest class which it has reached, almost the same arguments and difficulties that were heard thirty years ago in a higher class. I listened lately to a secularist orator declaiming in a town square exactly what would have been said a generation ago by any educated man of that way of thinking: but the difficulties of to-day among men of education are of a different order.

## SECTION I

### THE UNSETTLING BUT TEMPORARY EFFECTS OF SCIENTIFIC TRAINING

IT will be convenient to consider first those effects which we may reasonably regard as temporary, and belonging to a period of transition.

It is perhaps scarcely worth while here to reproduce in any detail the crudeness of the difficulties to which I have referred above. They turn, as one would expect, almost wholly on the incompatibility of the *results* of physical science with the verbal inspiration and literal interpretation of Scripture. They may therefore perhaps be thought not strictly germane to my subject, which is limited to the effects of scientific *training*. But it is important to us all to know that in a certain stratum of

uneducated society these difficulties are still very real, as the indirect results of scientific training. The points commonly insisted on are the impossibility of a sudden creation, the obvious difficulties of the Mosaic narratives, and the moral difficulties of the Old Testament.

But sometimes they reach a far higher level; and much thought and knowledge and sympathy are required to meet them. I listened some few years ago to one such lecturer who was refuting, and refuting very well, the old form of the Paleyan argument from design. "You talk," he was, in substance, saying of his imaginary antagonist, "you talk of the wonderful adaptations in the world. You say that the world is so exquisitely suited to its inhabitants, and its inhabitants to the world, that the design of a great Artificer is manifest. *Of course* the world is exquisitely suited to its inhabitants, or it would not be inhabited by them. There spring up in the ocean creatures that can live in the ocean; on dry land, things that can live on dry land; in deserts, plants that can live in deserts; in swamps, those that can live in swamps. If a tree or an animal

were not adapted in all respects to its surroundings it would die. There is no more design in the eye of a hawk than in the curve or slope of a sea beach, so admirably adapted to resist the waves. The one is the result of the unconscious, purposeless action of the waves; the other the result of the unconscious struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest." And he went on to speak of Design. "How can mind, will, interfere with matter and act on it? The action on physical matter must be physical, material. The world is one vast mechanical system. Everything is determined by what preceded it. There is no room for design in a world of which the supreme characteristic is universal physical law and physical sequence. It is only a question of complexity of causation; our thoughts are the results of motions of the molecules of the brain; and if one knew all antecedents, and if our means of calculation were adequate, it would be possible to predict all consequences."

The effect of scientific training, it will be seen, on this type of mind is to present to it an alternative between natural evolution by the

constant action of invariable and unconscious forces, and supernatural creation with design determining each detail as the need arises. "Choose," he said in fact, "between Nature acting by natural invariable laws which science unerringly reveals, and God acting arbitrarily and supernaturally of whom the theologians and the priests speak. Choose," he repeated, "between these two. For there is no third alternative." And all this was not easy for his hearers to see through or to answer.

I am not now going to deal with the fallacy of the alternative, and the exclusion of the third choice, of God acting in the physical realm by invariable laws, some of which science is revealing; nor with the fallacy of the opposition of natural and supernatural, an antithesis as fatal to science as it is to theology. With the methods of dealing with men in this condition I am not now concerned. But it is obvious that to assume that this alternative exhausts the possibilities is a barrier to the reception of religious truth; and it is a very necessary part of the training of the Christian apologist of to-day that he should be enabled

to meet with confidence such a man on his own ground. The belief that men are shut up to this alternative is beyond question an effect on a certain class of mind of scientific training, and it is very unfavourable to the reception of religious truth, since it excludes all thought of God, of freedom of the will, and therefore of morality. We shall see later how best to deal with these difficulties.

I have purposely taken the instance of a man of far more than average ability, who faced his thoughts to the best of his power, who clearly expressed, and boldly avowed them. There are very many more who share these impressions, but are unable to formulate them. On them the result is a certain vague unexpressed materialism. This materialism shows itself in a common attitude towards education and legislation. It is impossible to mistake a prevailing feeling about education. It is that technical education is the really nation-forming influence, reinforced by other branches of useful knowledge ; but that there is a prejudice still surviving among less advanced and old-fashioned minds, that not only ethical

advice and rules, but actually speculative and dogmatic truths should be taught in schools; and for the sake of peace this is conceded for the present till the prejudice dies out. This feeling, so far as it prevails, is in considerable measure one of the results of scientific training; and it is a really dangerous result. For if it reached a point at which a general abandonment of old principles in education became necessary, experience seems to show that national disintegration and mutual distrust must after a time set in.

A similar effect of scientific training is to weaken the religious faculties by mere disuse. In an essay, "On Teaching Natural Science in Schools," which I wrote as long ago as 1867 I find these words, and I cannot say the same thing better: "The vague impression that reverence, faith, belief in the unseen and the spiritual, and in truths derived from individual consciousness, are diminished, as superstitions are diminished, by the school of science, must not be met by an offhand denial that there is any foundation for it; for constant dealing with nature and the exercise of the intellect alone,



as contrasted with humanity and the exercise of the moral feelings, unquestionably tend to exclude men from the highest thoughts. . . . The constant study of one kind of evidence raises a secret disinclination, and real inaptitude for the time being, to accept evidence of a different kind, and induces men openly or tacitly to depreciate and distrust it. They are continually tempted to consider the finer mental and religious sensibilities as useless, and as if they proved nothing. They are facts, of course, but verge on fancies; and men so trained have acquired a distaste for this kind of reflection, and something of contempt for its value in others. They seem to have raised a wall between themselves and certain truths; to have dazzled their eyes by a study of the glaring truths of external nature, and to be for the time incapable of discerning the dimmer but nobler truths of the Soul and its relations.”<sup>1</sup>

It is not for a moment to be thought that the training in the physical sciences has in it anything in itself demoralising; it is simply that the imaginative and the introspective,

<sup>1</sup> *Essays on a Liberal Education.* Macmillan.

emotional, and religious faculties are liable to be dwarfed by disuse.

Another result of training in scientific methods is still very common. It is to make men profoundly dissatisfied with the methods and principles of much of the religious teaching that has been given them. They have become, through their scientific training, aware of the difficulty of ascertaining truth, of the many sources of error, of the imperfection of our faculties, senses, and judgment; they have learned that many theories, confidently held at one time and taught as facts, have been abandoned, and that we are compelled to hold many opinions as merely provisional, as useful colligations of facts, but as only imperfectly representing those facts. And to minds so trained there comes the conviction that much of what was taught them in connection with religion was taught without due regard for accuracy and truthfulness. And this discovery creates a strong prejudice against all that was so taught, and against all its teachers. I have personally known distinguished men of science who have spoken to me of their early

religious teaching (which was not exceptionally bad) as a crime committed against them—a crime which they could never forgive, and of which they could never obliterate the effects. The Bible was “spoiled for them for ever.” There is no stronger reason for the most scrupulously truthful religious teaching than this terrible, and very common, reaction in the minds of those who have been ill taught. The way to avoid and minimise this most serious effect of scientific training on the reception of religious thought is so to teach religion in every home, and every school, from the infant school to the university, that men and women shall have as little as possible to unlearn; or, in a word, to prepare religious thought for scientific training by making the religious teaching truthful, and not inconsistent with scientific methods and results.

Closely connected with this is the effect of scientific training on the mind of a man who is too deeply religious by temperament and by early associations to be able to throw off with resentment the misleading teachings of early years, but who continues to feel a life-long

struggle between the intellect on the one hand and what he feels as a sort of conscience or immovable prejudice on the other. The results of this struggle are often very sad. In some minds the conviction arises that religious teaching is irreconcilable with truth of fact, and that we must make up our minds to this antagonism. Men may choose, and they themselves have chosen, and there is at their age no going back. Of course such a conviction gives a great sense of weakness and of insecurity in all the religious beliefs which are retained. It induces an exaggeration of the dogmatic character of religious belief; because, as is well known, men make up for the want of certainty by extreme precision of statement; their minds turn away from fundamental truths to matters which only touch them superficially. This makes some men very unhappy. They feel in a false position; they dare not say to any clergyman, scarcely to any layman, what they think. The effect, direct or indirect, of sound scientific training in such cases as these is thus very unsettling; and such men can get no help from their friends, who either know nothing of

their difficulties, or who, like themselves, resolutely keep them under lock and key. It is plain that on them the indirect effect of scientific training is distinctly unfavourable to their reception of religious truth.

The result on the most thoughtful members of the class I am speaking of, men who, possessing a strong religious temperament, have come under the influence of scientific method, is that they shift the basis of their faith. They find, in other words, that their faith does not really rest where they supposed it did. To this also I shall recur later.

To sum up. Scientific training accentuates Biblical difficulties; and demands, if faith is to be preserved, more thought on first principles of Biblical interpretation than is often given; it accounts for the strong materialistic bias at present felt in education; it weakens the religious faculties by leading to their disuse; it provokes resentment in some minds against untruthful religious teaching, and in others leads to a still more emphatic dogmatism of despair. Nevertheless in the more thoughtful minds even at present scientific training is

leading to the establishment of faith on firm foundations other than those which had been undermined.

Such seem to me to be the most obvious and general effects of scientific training upon the reception of religious thought. The main thing to notice in them is that they are distinctly temporary, and belong to a time of transition. All these effects are passing away ; some have almost completely passed away from certain levels of education.

## SECTION II

### THE PERMANENT EFFECTS OF SCIENTIFIC TRAINING ON EDUCATED MINDS IN GENERAL

I PASS on now to some of the more obvious changes which seem likely to be permanent.

Science has, of course, infinitely widened our conception of the universe as to its extent in space, its duration in time, and as to the inconceivable complexity of what is spoken of as matter and ether. By familiarising us with infinities of space and time it has also rendered impossible to the scientific mind certain primitive and anthropomorphic conceptions of God which haunt popular religious literature. Science has completely altered men's conceptions of creation. Science tells us not of creation but of development. We have to interpret creation in the light of evolution;

and this has strained and stretched the old religious philosophy. Again, science has utterly indisposed men to rely on authority. All scientific investigation rests on an appeal to the facts themselves. It has become impossible to any one who has acquired the scientific standard of knowledge to rest content with any assertion without knowing on what facts it is based, and feeling that such facts and assertions are always open to re-examination. The law of gravitation is only accepted because any one may call it in question. Any doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture can only be accepted by scientific minds on the same ground.

The scientific habit of mind compels a man to think what is implied in his creed and his words. The one thing that such a man hates is "muddle"—a confused state of mind, that does not know on what its opinions rest, or whether they rest on anything. A man who has been really influenced by scientific training demands, so far as his abilities go, some degree of precision ; he demands accuracy and lucidity. We may be sure that this is a permanent result of the extension of scientific training. It will



be necessary for religious thought and method to be more orderly, more lucid, more cogent, in the future, than it has been in the past.

Again, a further result has been, or surely will be, to raise the standard of knowledge in all matters bearing on religion. Science explores with such minute care into every detail, as a glance at the monographs of any scientific society will show, that it makes men expect the same sort of accuracy and exhaustive care in all those fields which border on religion, such as interpretation, scholarship, antiquarianism, history; and finally in the statements of belief and of duty, in the philosophy of religion, and in the morality it inculcates. Scientific training disposes people to resent all that is slipshod, wordy, inaccurate. This also we may be sure is a permanent effect.

Another result of scientific training has been to raise a barrier more impassable than ever between what we know as the regions of mind and matter. Both regions are but very imperfectly known to us, and their relation to one another is still less known; but closely as they are related, it is becoming more, and not less,

impossible to bridge even in thought the interval between them. On the one hand, it is increasingly obvious every day how intimately connected are body and mind; we know how a slight lesion of the brain affects all the intellectual faculties of a man, and how a little morphia may subvert even his character. There are a thousand illustrations of this. Again, all the latest speculations as to the relations of matter and ether seem to point to matter as a mere motion of ether. But, on the other hand, however close the connection, it is impossible to bridge the interval between mechanism and self-consciousness. Not a single step has been taken or imagined in this direction. We can imagine mechanism of unlimited complexity, like Professor Osborne Reynolds' ether atoms (Rede Lecture, 1902); but when all is done we are plainly not one whit nearer the solution of the problem how this mechanism thinks; how it becomes self-conscious. It is an instrument, an organ, a mechanism, and the more we know about it the wider is the gap that separates the mechanism from the mind that uses it. This is another

permanent effect of scientific training. One sees at present semi-scientific people who do not feel this gap, and are dazzled by the little knowledge they possess; but the effect of thorough scientific training is unmistakable. It reveals the permanent chasm between the material and the spiritual.

I am tracing the permanent effects of scientific training on men's reception of religious truth; and one among these, closely connected with what has been just said, is the increased sense of mystery in the universe, and especially of the mystery in man. This has always characterised the true men of science, and the wider and sounder scientific training becomes, the more general is also this sense of mystery. The popular mind is inclined to think that, because we know something about stars and the earth and plants, practically all is known. But to an ever wider circle of scientific people it is not our knowledge but our ignorance that is so surprising. "We know in part and we prophesy in part." And therefore one may possess his soul in patience when listening to materialistic

dogmatisers who seem to know everything. They are only for the time. That which is permanent is modesty, awe, reverence for the mystery of things.

A further point is that a real acquaintance with any branch of science compels one to see that religion lies in a wholly different and still more important sphere. One learns how to combine a very high estimate of the dignity and utility of science with an acknowledgment of its insufficiency, nay, its inappropriateness, as a guide to life. It is a mere instrument, a very important instrument, in life, but no more. It is not in science that our true life consists. Provided some one knows how to make a pump or a telegraph, and some one knows what nebulæ are made of, and the properties of argon, this is all we want. It is not of importance to us as human beings that we should all have an independent knowledge of scientific results. We can leave them to specialists. But religion concerns us all; for it supplies nothing less than the inner motive to personal duty and to life. Science does not touch directly the springs of conduct or of

ethics, though it supplies much information as to consequences. In fact the more scientific we become, the more clearly do we learn that our scientific faculty, our intelligence, is not ourselves. How easily we lay it aside like a tool! How indifferent to it we are! But our affections, our will, our conscience, the religious faculty, this is central. This we cannot lay aside; this is our very selves. One, therefore, of the permanent influences of scientific training upon men is to teach them how small a part the results of science play in the formation of character of man. Scientific method is an instrument in the training of his faculties for advancing the utilities of life, for widening his knowledge and imagination, but not more.

The natural further consequence already manifest, and likely to be permanent, is that scientific training is affecting the methods of investigation into the realm of religion, and translating them into a higher region, a region of the interaction of the mind and will of man with that of God, the supreme Mind. The nobler, therefore, and wider the range of science becomes, so much the more lofty and

ethereal does the region of religion necessarily become. It is a region of mystery; but the mystery does not oppress us, because it is a mystery arising from the limitation of our faculties, and from the nature of our past developments. Hence it would seem to be a permanent result of scientific training that while a man is made more critical and *exigeant* in examining the grounds of his religious faith, yet he is not thereby rendered indisposed to recognise a region in which scientific proof is inapplicable, and in which intuition, *i.e.* faith more or less verified and approved by reason, is supreme. The conviction grows that there exists a reality corresponding to our moral ideals, a conviction just as strong, and just as incapable of proof, as that there exists a reality in matter corresponding to our sensations. That this will be a permanent conviction, at any rate among Western minds, seems probable. The evidence, historical and philosophical, is accumulating in favour of such natural religion.

But, at the same time, a mind, affected by scientific training, applying itself seriously to

religion, almost inevitably demands simplicity, and general principles, even amid mystery. It cannot be denied that the scientific mind is rendered fearless, and therefore averse to the refusal to investigate ultimate principles, averse to anything like a timid economy of truth. Hence it would seem to be a permanent effect of scientific training on the reception of religious thought to dispose the mind not to destroy or to dissolve but to simplify; to place truths in clear order and perspective; the dominant and universal truths before others which are derivative and partial; those which are true for all and for all equally before those which specially attract and affect individual minds. Scientific training thus tends also to prevent the disintegration of theology by excessive minuteness.

## SECTION III

### THE PROBABLE PERMANENT EFFECTS OF SCIENTIFIC TRAINING ON THEOLOGICAL METHODS

STILL more important is the revolution that scientific training is making in theological methods; in presenting the foundations of our belief.

Scientific training will not permit the question to be left in abeyance, as if the decision was unimportant, on what foundation, in the last resort, does our belief in God, and in human responsibility, rest. Does it rest ultimately on the historical evidence for statements contained in the Bible, or on authoritative declarations made by the Church? Does it therefore share in all the weaknesses attaching to such authority, and to the uncertain interpretations of poetry, metaphor, narrative,



and the abstract terms of thought used in other languages? Is theology, in a word, an uncertain deduction from precarious and shifting postulates? That it is this in the minds of many persons is certain, who regard it therefore as scientifically worthless, even if practically useful.

Now the most permanent, and perhaps the most important, effect of scientific training is to compel the ultimate adoption in theology of some scientific method of investigation, and to force us to find some firm ground in experience, and in the nature of things, for those beliefs which have been common to the whole human race, and form the foundation of religion. The effect is, in a word, to compel the treatment of theology as a science; and, so far as the method is applicable, as an inductive science. None of us can as yet see all that is implied in this. But this at any rate can be seen: that the effect is to compel us to assume the reality of the phenomena with which religious experience is concerned, and to make them the foundation of faith. The prevalence of scientific method demands serious attention to

the science of theology, as one dealing with facts of the highest importance; and submits to verification every stage of the inductions of that science. The ultimate result is to include religion in the realm of universal law.

The consideration of this point of view, even if unfamiliar to us, will help us to understand the mind of the thoughtful layman whose whole education and habit of view are inductive. His religion is a very real thing indeed; but it is based in reality on personal experience, on conscience, on his intuitive knowledge of God. And much of our teaching seems to him to have a wholly different origin. What we say hangs loosely on him, like clothes. It is not a part of himself; he does not wish to throw it off; it would make him feel naked; and he could not make it over again for himself. But for all that it is not really part of himself, it is not clearly co-ordinated with other knowledge. It is an extra, an overcoat, a *superstitio*.

The effect of scientific training is always to promote a search for continuity. Whether it be the contrast between matter and force,

solid and liquid and gaseous, animal and vegetable, natural and supernatural, human and divine, the scientific mind searches for transitional forms and conditions. Hence it is inevitable that a change in the view of revelation will take place. It will lose something of its apparent discontinuity, and come to be regarded as an influence of the Divine Spirit on the Human Mind, discernible in many forms, seen in operation "at sundry times and in divers manners." It will be seen that Revelation is part of the actual present organic process of things; that behind all the facts of history and observation some Purpose is discernible, and that there exists the actual working of an invisible God on the minds of men. We shall not, therefore, repeat the mistake made by a certain school of naturalists. Some of them seem to have inferred that because there are normal influences at work tending slowly to modify varieties, therefore the appearance of species *per saltum* is incredible. We shall not infer that because the influence of the Holy Spirit is felt in its degree on all, therefore the doctrine of the

Incarnate Word is incredible. It is all the more assured thereby, and all the more intelligible.

Another great and permanent influence of scientific training is, that it compels us to regard theology as progressive. That morality is progressive we now recognise; and the discovery has made the Old Testament intelligible. But it is a less familiar thought that theology is not a closed science. Of course the mass of what has to be said in a science so old, so world-wide, will be old; but it is like a coral reef: there is always a living and fresh fringe and surface to it. Theology always seems new and living when we ourselves regard it as in direct relation with present facts. What comes with unexpected force is the conviction that in some truth, expressed imperfectly in some familiar dogmatic form, we have the key that fits the lock of the problem of to-day.

How much this association of the thought of progressiveness with theology will affect us it is impossible to say. It appears to me that it will infuse into its study quite a new life. We can tolerate any degree of incompleteness,

social, ethical, scientific, theological, provided we recognise the present condition as the pathway, and the only pathway, to something better. But we cannot tolerate imperfection posing as perfection. The thought of progressiveness makes theology alive. It justifies her claim to be the queen of the sciences. Progress cannot be limited to a few classes of study, it must include the highest of all. We may put it down as one of the permanent effects of scientific training that the mind becomes expectant of progress; that is, of more discrimination and selection, and of more reasoned and sounder and wider inductions than those which have passed current as the theology of the past.

This statement as to progressiveness in theology will be perhaps admitted in general, and then denied in any specific instance. But we shall, in fact, learn tolerance through science. We have much to learn, for there is an immense prejudice in favour of regarding theology as unprogressive. And yet how atheistic is the thought of unprogressiveness, when it is once understood. "If the Comforter," said Bishop Thirlwall, "is really to

guide men into all truth, then His later lessons may well transcend His earlier." Crude and preliminary generalisations in theology must be superseded by later and juster generalisations, as in every other department of human thought.

I dwell on this progressiveness for many reasons ; chiefly because of the extreme reluctance that will be felt to accept the statement that theology, at any time, cannot be more than a summary of the best thought on ultimate problems of man's nature. The reluctance will be extreme to admit a principle which may seem to involve the shaking of the very foundations of religious certitude. For there will be many who feel that all experience is in favour of the practical advantage of certitude. It will be urged that it is in the certitude of the Mohamadan's faith, or of the Romanist's,—in the unalterability of their faith, the superiority to all examination,—that the strength of such faith lies. It is so. Certitude in presence of ignorance makes devotees—but certitude in presence of knowledge makes sceptics ; certitude under some conditions makes for strength, but under other conditions it makes for paralysis.

Another consequence of the scientific spirit, obvious indeed, but worth mentioning, is that our assent to some theological dogmas will be more confident than our assent to others. It is a simple matter of observation that the fact is so. We are, as every one will admit, tending towards the holding of a few truths which we trust to more entirely, and towards the holding with a less tenacious grasp other opinions. Illustrations of the fact will occur at once to every one. But the full significance of this fact and its hopefulness may not at once be seen. It was, I believe, a saying of Fichte, that "science converts faith into insight." I take this to mean that the scientific habit of mind, which reasons inductively, when applied, as it must be, to the subjects of human life and ethics, transforms the unanalytic trust in a providential ordering of the world, which we call faith, into a reasoned and profound insight into the laws of God. It means that under the influence of scientific method, faith grows into a reasoned perception of the essential and important truths of life and thought, and leads to the expression of these truths as reasoned certainties. And

it is certain that this will tend to simplification of dogma and differentiation of certitude.

In this simplification of theology, a transformation which is being slowly effected before our eyes, lies, I believe, a great hope for the future of our Church and its theology. I know that at this point we come to the parting of the ways. At this point *Samios diducit littera ramos*.

To some temperaments it will seem that the present fluid state of religious thought calls for the more explicit, the more unhesitating, and the more all-embracing dogmatic teaching. It will give, as they say, backbone to our teaching. There is something in what they say. That method will get hold of and guide some. But I believe that among our people, the proportion that can be so got hold of and guided is ever growing smaller, and that it is not in that direction that truth or expediency lies. The fluid state of religious thought is no doubt responsible for the fact that religious principles play so small a part in the great politics of the world, or of a nation, or of the smaller politics of the home. But this in its turn arises from the fact that the



confidence in the truths of religion felt by the average man of the world is extremely weak. But if the great moral laws of God, which sum up theology as it affects conduct, should come to be held with the conviction and certitude that follow great inductions perpetually verified, how different may be the influence of religious principles on a nation ! It may come by this process to be really felt that morality is of the nature of things, as much as inertia or gravitation. The tendency of scientific thought would seem to be therefore to concentrate certitude on a few plain and central truths, in theology and ethics as in science, and to permit the acceptance of much as provisional hypothesis which up to this time it has been thought unfaithful to question. We may hope for the advantages of certitude without its corresponding evils.

If this prospect of differentiation of certitude seems to any one alarming and unsettling, I would ask him to reflect whether this is wholly unlike our Lord's own method. He placed Himself before His disciples, and they drew their own inferences. He did not hurry them ;

and He did not coerce them. Theology as He laid the foundation of it was a gradual induction from observation, and a progressive interpretation of experience. We cannot but admit that Christian theology, as we know it, took its origin in the interpretation of Christ by a Church in which His Spirit was ever present to lead them towards truth, rather than in dogmatic words from Himself so explicit and final as to preclude all fresh light of revelation. In this sense it may be said that it is not the historic, so much as the living and present Christ, who is the Christ of theology. The historicity of the historic Christ is not impugned, but is confirmed, by this way of regarding the origin of Christian theology.

The harmony between the scientific and the religious mind, which must be the final result of the worthy study of science and religion, will be found in the widest acceptance of the limitation of our faculties, an acceptance alike unwelcome to the student of either science alone or of theology alone. We find ourselves in a world of physical law in which we find it impossible to believe in the disturbing influ-

ence of any outside immaterial cause which we may invoke; and we also find ourselves as spiritual beings closely connected with, but apart from matter and controlling it; and we have a first-hand conviction, which we cannot ignore, that our minds and spirits are related to something outside ourselves, and that we are members of a spiritual world, and under its moral laws. We will be modest enough not to deny either material or spiritual world, or to regard either as excluding the other, though we cannot see them in relation to one another. We will not consent to the negations of either science or religion, while we accept their affirmations. Spiritual personality remains, and is a witness to the existence of a world other than the physical. We will recall Matthew Arnold's line

Men must begin, know this, where Nature ends.

## SECTION IV

### SOME SPECULATIONS AS TO REMOTER EFFECTS OF SCIENTIFIC TRAINING UPON THE RECEP- TION OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH.

THERE is another probable result of scientific training which is so different from those which I have hitherto spoken of that it requires a separate section.

The scientific training of the laity inevitably involves on the part of theologians a very resolute, prolonged, and impartial examination into the first principles of our religion. This will require not years but centuries. For the advance of the inductive method is in the same relation to Christian thought and doctrine of to-day that the Greek philosophy was when first it was brought into close contact with Christian thought. It is an influence that

compels the most exhaustive examination of first principles. In those early centuries the Christian school of Alexandria had to hold its own in open debate against the combination of Greek philosophy and Oriental mysticism ; and it is never to be forgotten that out of that fierce discussion sprang the strongest, wisest, and most durable theology the world has yet seen. It led to the Nicene Creed. The extreme freedom of discussion of Christendom of to-day can best be paralleled in the discussions of that age. The Christianity of to-day is already brought into contact with two additional solvents, the inductive philosophy, and the claims of natural religion as witnessed by the ancient Oriental religions, for the first time made known to the West during the last century ; and Christianity may yet have to encounter more powerful solvents than these.

And the parallel with the Alexandrian age is closer than this. There was then, as there is now, the apparent antagonism between the two conceptions of God, the indwelling and the transcendent. They are not, indeed, mutually

exclusive: nevertheless it is substantially true that the theology of the Church, so far as it is popularly apprehended, is believed to rest on the latter conception; and under the influence now of science, as then of philosophy, the intellectual world can accept only the former. One great and permanent effect of scientific training is thus a reversion to the Greek or Eastern or Athanasian type of theology, and the re-interpretation of the language of our formularies in that sense. The religious philosophy of a religious man of science is therefore identical in some essential points with the old Greek orthodox theology. That theology remains orthodox. It has never been superseded; it has only been forgotten. There is nothing to prevent our recurring to that orthodox or Johannine simplicity. "This Word, Who was from the beginning, Who appeared as new, and yet was proved to be old, and is engendered always young in the hearts of Saints, He I say was eternal." So we read in the Epistle to Diognetus. The central doctrines of Clement and Athanasius, if I understand them right, are not incom-

patible with the philosophic spirit that is the result of inductive science. Science can contemplate the doctrine of an Eternal Word, the Teacher and Perfecter of men; and can accept the doctrine of salvation as a renewal of our souls in holiness, and the recovery of the image of God by a true spiritual acquaintance with Him.

The whole conception of Evolution leads to the universal immanence of God. This is and must be the religion of the Evolutionist. I do not of course say that this removes all difficulty; but it is one of the effects of scientific training on the reception of religious truth, that the only theory of God possible to the Evolutionist is that of the indwelling God. The difficulty lies here. Evolution de-anthropomorphises God, and therefore comes perilously near de-personalising Him. Sooner or later we come to this issue. Sooner or later science seems to divest the God of the Evolutionist of everything we can love, and of every definable or imaginable relation to the individual soul. Reason is cogent, inexorable, even when faith remains. God seems lost in the dim infinity

of law which science has revealed. Is not then this God of the Evolutionist identical with the God of the Pantheist?

Men stand on the brink of this thought, and shudder at it, as they dip their feet in its chilling stream. But cross it they must; cross it the Church must; on the other side is a faith which has found as yet no exponent.

This is, I suspect, the problem which will tax the next age. The rest of what I have to say will consist of a few suggestions as to our attitude towards it, and its possible developments.

We must acquiesce in a totally imperfect solution. Scientific training has indeed done little for us unless it has taught us that we are as yet almost infinitely remote from complete knowledge. Verily "we know in part," and we shall do well to "prophesy in part." If indeed, as the theistic theory of evolution declares, Nature is the inchoate self-expression of God, we must be still in very early stages of that expression. God must transcend Nature and pervade it, as the mind and will of man transcends his body and pervades it, and that



in a far higher degree. No cell of a human body, no microbe in its tissues, can interpret the personality of the whole; and we men simply cannot grasp the Personality of God, and His Love and Fatherhood, when we think of all Nature as the expression of His living and acting Will.

Nevertheless, since reason and righteousness are in man, there must be a rational and righteous reality, evolving Himself in us; and since love is the best in us, there must be love in God. The loving Father must be there; though our poor undeveloped minds cannot simultaneously combine His loving fatherhood with His immanence, and with the uniform working of His laws of nature. I know that this is the problem of philosophy; the passage from the individual and subjective to the universal and objective. It may be impossible to demonstrate the possibility of the passage; but without it there is no knowledge possible to us, and no rationality anywhere.

There is yet another thought for which I should wish to find expression.

Scientific training is not confined to the

study of physical and historical science ; it includes the scientific study of ethics. It would be a worthy subject for examination, what is the effect of a systematic study of ethics on the reception of religious truth. I am not qualified to make that examination. But so far as I can trace in my own mind the influence of such studies, elementary as mine have been, it is to give a greater confidence in the objectivity of the moral ideal, by which I mean the best that we are able to conceive. Instead of this presenting itself to us as a mere ideal aim, it tends to come before us as a reality in which our personalities are somehow bound up. The various theories of ethics all seem to require something outside men ; some objectivity which embraces them all. There is something which cannot be explained by utilitarianism, or hedonism, or intuition, or their combination. There must be something behind. Now if this is so in any degree it makes the moral ideal much more than an ideal ; it assures us that what we call an ideal is really a power working in and for us all. And there is no such source of sustained energy as this belief.

If, indeed, scientific training is found to have this effect it is a true ally of religion. And it is so primarily because it helps us to explain the lowest by the Highest, to see Nature as destined to find its explanation and meaning in that supreme moral reality of which we have become convinced, and not to see Nature as the inexplicable development of intricate mechanical laws. I say "Nature as destined to find," for it is impossible in the midst of the vast æons of evolutionary progress to anticipate the finding. But this conviction of evolution, combined with the conviction of a moral ideal, gives us an assurance of our faith. It appears to me, but I know that here I am travelling outside both the range of my proper subject and my special studies, that the scientific study of ethics will find a solid basis for that characteristic of all religions that the individual feels himself bound to some wider community, whether family or nation or race, personified in some Being whom to know and to serve is man's natural duty. At our present stage such personification is regarded by philosophers as an idealisation; it will perhaps eventually

be regarded in the opposite light, that the reality of that Person is the cause of our feeling so bound to Him. The early religions may then eventually be seen to have had indeed the limitations of tribalism and nationalism, but to have been the anticipations of a universal and world-wide kingdom of God.

I can cordially adopt the final words of the late Professor Henry Sidgwick in his work on the *Methods of Ethics*:—

“The whole system of our beliefs as to the intrinsic reasonableness of conduct must fall without a hypothesis, unverifiable by experience, reconciling the individual with the Universal Reason; without a belief, in some form or other, that the moral order, which we see imperfectly realised in this actual world, is yet actually perfect. If we reject this belief, we may perhaps still find in the non-moral universe an adequate object for the Speculative Reason, capable of being in some sense ultimately understood. But the Cosmos of Duty is thus really reduced to a Chaos: and the prolonged effort of the human intellect to frame a perfect ideal of rational conduct is

seen to have been foredoomed to inevitable failure.”<sup>1</sup>

I venture on these general anticipations because scientific method always seems to lead towards general laws and comprehensive views. And if scientific method is profoundly to affect religious thought, it would therefore seem probable that some general feeling of brotherhood will grow among men, and some general recognition of God as the Source of all Life, and the Revealer of all Truth, through His Son; and the Worker in every one through His indwelling Spirit. We shall, I believe, become through scientific methods assured that we are parts of a whole which is realising itself, in us and without us; and this assurance is a solid basis for the reception of religious truth.

There is, lastly, a new science coming to its birth, the scientific study of the nature and the value of religious experience, of which we have received the latest instalment in Professor James's *Gifford Lectures*. What is to be the attitude of religious men towards this new

<sup>1</sup> *Methods of Ethics*, p. 474, ed. 1874.

science? A saying of Agassiz is the best indication what that attitude ought not to be. He said that the reception of scientific discoveries generally passed through three stages: first, men said, "It is not true"; next, "It is contrary to religion"; and then, "Everybody knew it before." It may be hoped that the effect of scientific training on us all will prevent our receiving this new science in this old spirit. We may be sure that so far as our faith is in correspondence with truth and reality it will be able to absorb all new truth which may be laid open to us; and it cannot be in the interest of the truth to avoid examination; nor in the interest of light to prefer darkness.

No scientific training and no scientific results can ever obscure our inner conviction of the need of righteousness, and of the supremacy of the moral law; and if scientific training tends to enthrone this law as supreme in our lives, we may welcome it as a great educator of the mind of man for the reception of religious truth.

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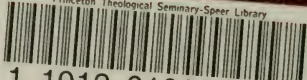








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